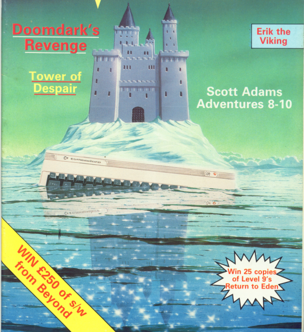
micro Adventurer

The computer strategy and simulation magazine

January 1985

75p



Doomdark's Revenge

Tower of Despair

Erik the Viking

Scott Adams Adventures 8-10

WIN £250 of s/w from Beyond

Win 25 copies of Level 9's Return to Eden

HAVE AN ADVENTURE THIS CHRISTMAS WITH LEVEL 9

"The appearance of a new program from Level 9 is a flag-day for all aspiring adventures and, in my household, a signal for the cat to hide under the bed for the duration against the inevitable moment when I go rampaging through the flat, a wild look in my eyes muttering ferociously about bricklaying birds nudist beaches and the like. Since *Return to Eden*, the sequel to *Snowball* is out, the cat may be in hiding until Christmas.

You don't need to have played *Snowball* to get into the sequel as ever, there is ample documentation with the tape which in my Commodore 64 version (it is also on the Spectrum, Amstrad and BBC), is turbo-loaded. It starts with you, agent Kim Kimberly, having been framed for sabotaging the colonyship Snowball, in a crashed stratoglider on the planet Eden. For the moment your mission is to survive the misplaced retribution by your own people, but life gets very much more complicated than that. Solving these puzzles has nothing to do with luck you either figure your way out of trouble on Eden or die there.

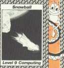
One major difference between this and former Level 9 efforts is that the Spectrum and C64 versions have graphics of a very high quality and can be switched off if required. The scope of the vocabulary appears unscathed by this addition.

Even experienced adventurers will probably get fried a few times by the avenging engines of the Snowball, before discovering how to take shelter. But, once that hurdle is passed, the real adventure begins, and it's a lulu. From the radioactive desert caused by the engine blast, you progress through a variety of hazards through some highly unlikely locations.

I haven't got to that point yet, and so far superhuman willpower has stopped me using the clue sheet provided, but I can't hold out very much longer since I am having what could be lethal communication problems with some robots. Terrific fun, but should carry a mental health warning."

Popular Computing Weekly 7 Nov 84









DISTRIBUTORS

If your local dealer doesn't stock Level 9 adventures yet, use the coupon to buy them from us, or ask him to contact: Centresoft, Microdealer UK, Lightning, R&R, Leisuresoft, PCS(SW), MCD, TBD etc.

	Cassette £9.95	Disk £11.95 BBC or CBM64
COLOSSAL ADVENTURE: The classic mainframe game, with 70 bonus rooms.	☐	☐
ADVENTURE QUEST: An epic puzzle journey through Middle Earth.	☐	☐
DUNGEON ADVENTURE: 40 treasures to find and 100+ puzzles to solve.	☐	☐
SNOWBALL: Immense Science Fiction game with over 7000 locations.	☐	☐
RETURN TO EDEN: Vegetarian adventure. (Amstrad, CBM 64 and Spectrum versions have 240 pictures)	☐	☐
LORDS OF TIME: Imaginative romp through World History.	☐	☐
ERIK THE VIKING: Family game for BBC, CBM 64 and Spectrum only. All with 180+ pictures.	☐	

I ENCLOSE A CHEQUE/PO FOR £9.95 PER CASSETTE OR £11.95 PER DISK

My name: ____________

My address: ____________

My micro is ____________
(one of those listed below with at least 32K). Send coupon to:

LEVEL 9 COMPUTING
Dept V, 229 Hughenden Road
High Wycombe, Bucks. HP13 5PG

AMSTRAD BBC CBM64 SPECTRUM MEMOTECH NASCOM ATARI

micro Adventurer

Editor
Brendon Gore

Assistant Editor
Martin Croft

Software Editor
Graham Taylor

Master Adventurers
Tony Bridge
Mike Grace
Ken Matthews

Editorial Secretary
Geraldine Smyth

Group Advertisement Manager
David Lake

Advertisement Manager
Simon Langston

Administration
Theresa Lacy

Managing Editor
Brendon Gore

Publishing Director
Jenny Ireland

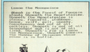
Telephone number
(all departments)
01-437 4343

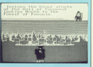
UK address
Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7PP

US address
Micro Adventurer, c/o Business Press International, 205 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017

Subscriptions
UK £10.00 for 12 issues, overseas surface (excluding US and Canada) £16 for 12 issues, US and Canada air-lifted US$33.95 for 12 issues.

Micro Adventurer is published monthly by Sunshine Books, Scot Press Ltd. Typesetting by In-Step Ltd, 33-41 Dallington Street, London EC1. Printed by Eden Fisher (Southend) Ltd, Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Distributed by SM Distribution, London SW9 (telephone 01-274 8611, telex: 261643). ISSN 0265-4156. Registered at the Post Office as a newspaper.





EDITORIAL

THOSE OF YOU who have explored the land of Midnight will be familiar with the tale of Luxor the Moonprince and his struggles to defeat the evil Doomdark. Luxor's son Morkin, Rorthron the Wise, Corleth the Fey and a cast of supporting characters were responsible for helping Luxor storm the citadel of Ushgarak, seat of Doomdark's power.

Many of these characters reappear in Icemark, a land to the north of Midnight and the setting for Doomdark's Revenge, the second part of Mike Singleton's Midnight trilogy. The object of this game is to subdue Shareth Heartstealer, Doomdark's daughter, and rescue Morkin from her clutches.

Both games have superb graphics, a feature not often associated with adventures. The Midnight saga also benefits from the amount of thought put into the games before they were written. Just like an iceberg, 9/10ths of the game lies below the surface.

The ability to switch from one player's viewpoint to another is also to be prized. It is fascinating to plan two or more different strategies and to discover how they work out in practise. But, when switching between eight or more characters, it can become confusing.

One of the exciting features is being able to save a game before fighting a battle. Then, if you happen to lose, you can reload the game and change your tactics. Napoleon should have had it so easy.

What the game lacks is on-screen pictures of the battles themselves and a group command to enable you to transmit one order to all the characters you control. But these are small criticisms when set against the quality of the game overall.

Beyond are setting a new standard for computer games with the Midnight series. It will be interesting to see who attempts to produce games of a similar quality.

LETTERS

Send your hints, successes, complaints and compliments to Letters Page, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2H 7PP

Not Harry's game

IT WAS nice to see the review of Level 9's *Return to Eden* in December's *Micro Adventurer*. I'm glad that the reviewer liked it, but he is mistaken in saying that the first part of the adventure is based on Harry Harrison's *Deathworld 1*.

Deathworld 1 is a fine book and is mentioned in the manual, but *Eden* has a fundamentally different background — it's an alien "Theme Park" gone wild. The *Eden* universe is more like Niven's *Future Space* than anything by Harrison. And, for those who like deeper meanings, *Return to Eden* is intended as a comment on Superpower intervention in the Third World.

Level 9 would not knowingly copy the plot of any book without first buying the game rights (that's why we've not done a Thomas Covenant game!). We'd far rather produce original adventures.

Pete Austin
Partner
Level 9 Computing

Midnight tipping

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT is a brilliant game — by far the best I own and an absolute must for any Spectrum owner. My only complaint is that it is too easy! On my first major attempt, my brother and I won a military victory, taking eight hours to do it. The next day we won a quest victory.

As we were new to the game, we did without certain lords we had not found, like Farflame, Korinel, Rorath, Blood, Thimrath, Herath and Lorgrim the Wise. Also Shadows, Brith, Lothoril and Gloom did not reach the battle in time. We also managed to win without losing Xajorkith or capturing the Ice Crown.

We left the Lord of Xajorkith there, and moved Shimeril to help him. The armies defending the Citadel were either left as they were or recruited by the two Lords. We tackled Ushgarak before these armies were defeated.

Our offensive tactics were simple. We concentrated our men at the citadel of Ithril, marched on and took the Citadel of Grarg, got the men invigorated, and took Ushgarak.

Now to your article in November. I was particularly impressed by Geoff Lynas' victory. This is obviously a much better tactic than mine, and also gives a much greater chance of victory.

Julie Lewis' account was excellent. There were only one or two little mistakes I could pick out, and these were in the list of the Lords. Of the Lords of the Fey, Whispers has a keep, not a citadel, while Dregrim has a citadel not a keep. Also the Lord of Thrall and Korinel the Fey are found at villages, not keeps, but this is mentioned in the text anyway.

I would be pleased to offer anybody help with *Midnight*, if they send me a stamped addressed envelope.

Sean Davies
Ty-yn-y-cae
Princetown
Tredegar
Gwent
NP2 3AE

in Shadows

A TIP that could be useful for those still struggling with *Midnight* and who may dismiss the Lord of Shadows as someone to use to play for time. I moved him to Xajorkith, and on the journey there he was a total failure, constantly tired and unable to fight. Once he was on the march from Xajorkith to Ushgarak he proved invaluable.

I think he must be a kind of Jekyll and Hyde character — on the offensive he is always ready to do battle and never becomes too afraid to fight, unlike some of the other Lords.

Barbara Walker
London N10

THANKS to all the readers who corrected our errors in the *Midnight* piece — no doubt we'll get a lot of correspondence about our *Doomdark's Revenge* article in this month (see page 8).

Get it right!

I'D LIKE to congratulate you on the higher and higher quality of *Micro Adventurer* — but I have a few suggestions on how to improve it even more.

You should replace Your Adventures: it was really a great help for anyone who wanted to write an adventure, and who had problems about particular routines.

In my opinion, you should give more room to Tony Bridge. After all, adventuring is nice but swapping solutions amongst stuck adventurers is nicer!

Why not review more adventures? You should review from 10 to 20 adventures per issue, especially the WORST ONES, in order to prevent us from wasting our money!

Well done for the series of articles about Scott's adventures. I think that these pieces are definitely useful and well organised.

Mario Faraone
Rome
Italy

Now Ket out of that!

I AM quite a new reader of *Micro Adventurer*. Looking through the pages I see lots of news and offers of help, but one letter in the November issue caught my eye. It was Scott Warner's query about the *Mountains of Ket*, and how to solve the final problem.

Could he or any other reader help me get past the dragon in the pit room, with the door that keeps slamming shut. Every time I play I get either roasted or killed. Also I don't have a clue what to do with the guard dog or elixir.

Perhaps the renowned Tom Frost could help me — will he claim the video recorder when he beats the guardians? Anyway I'm coming to the end of the page, so would somebody please help me — I'm going mad.

Tony O'Reilly
214 Northborough Road
Norbury
London SW16 4BA

Valhalla

AFTER many months of trying to solve *Valhalla* I have now come to a complete dead stop. So far I have found the first two quest objects, but do not seem to be able to get any further.

On reading Mike Stackwell's article in May's *Micro Adventurer*, and examining the map, I can only assume I have gone wrong somewhere. I already had all the locations he showed plus the others which Ofnir allows access to. The only part of the map I did not agree with was where he shows a ringway from Krankle's Hall to location number 6 — no way am I able to jump from there.

Could you clear up this point for me, and if any readers could tell me what use Drapnir is, and what the third clue in the Valhalla booklet means please could they let me know.

J Fox
3 Mowbray Avenue
Sedgley Park
Prestwich
M25 8LP

THERE was a misprint in early versions of *Valhalla* — now there is no ringway from Rankle's Hall to any other location.

Help

I AM a new recruit to adventure games and have just discovered *Micro Adventurer*.

I have an Electron and have bought *The Count*, *The Eye of Zoltan* and *Five Stones of Anaclon*. Unfortunately I am completely stuck on all of them.

Could you please let me know if any back issues of your magazine advise on how to set out on an adventure game, or give any hints on the games I have. Any help would help me from going mad.

Elizabeth Young
4 Cannons Mead
Stondon Massey
Nr Brentwood
Essex

THE November issue covered *The Count*, but off hand we can't say if hints for the others have been given elsewhere.

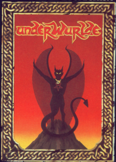
We haven't published any articles on how to start off solving adventures, but we have one planned for later in 1985. Meanwhile, you could try phoning Ken Matthews' Adventureline, on 0474-334008.

ULTIMATE
PLAY THE GAME

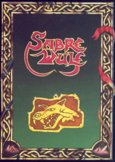
48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM



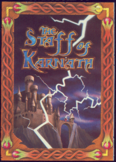
48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM



BBC MODEL B 1·2 OS
48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM



COMMODORE 64



"KNIGHTLORE", "UNDERWURLDE", "SABRE WULF", and "STAFF OF KARNATH" recommended retail price £9.95 inc VAT. Available from W.H.SMITH, BOOTS, J.MENZIES, WOOLWORTHS and all good software retail outlets. Also available from ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME, The Green, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE6 5JU (P&P are included). Tel: 0530 411485.



The Adventure to blow your mind

Because you write the adventure on your computer…in English!

Mastermind your own adventures. Your own heroes and villains. Magicians and monsters. Warriors and vampires. Castles and coffins.

The only restriction to your adventures is your imagination.

The range of possible game creations is almost inexhaustible. AdventureWriter does not allow you to get bored.

Every game is automatically error-trapped – and can be saved on disk or tape. All you do is create the adventure… in plain English.

Once you're happy with an adventure, you can sell it to your friends or market it through the AdventureWriter library of ready-to-run games. If accepted, a royalty will be winging its way to you!

AdventureWriter will run on either **Commodore 64**, **Atari** or **Apple II** computers. Demand it from your dealer today! Tell him it's available through Terry Blood, P.C.S., Tiger or CentreSoft. Or order now – fill in the coupon below.



Adventure Writer™

A CodeWriter™ Program

LET THE EXCITEMENT BEGIN!

CodeWriter Ltd CodeWriter House PO Box 33 Basingstoke RG24 0UG

Please send me my AdventureWriter disk for:

Atari ☐ Commodore 64 ☐ Apple II ☐ Price £24.95 each.

Overseas orders add £1. I enclose a cheque/PO/IMO for £______

made payable to CodeWriter Ltd. BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE

Name______

Address______

______Postcode______

Post to: CodeWriter Ltd CodeWriter House PO Box 33
Basingstoke RG24 0UG Tel: 0256 27844

Please allow 28 days for delivery.

AWMA1



The Red Kipper Flies at Midnight

YOU GET HOME ONE EVENING to discover a message on your answering machine. Something you'd thought hidden for good has reared its ugly head once again. Valkyrie 17 is active.

Over the next five nights a series of frantic phone calls convince you that the matter deserves further investigation. You receive a dossier on the activities of Valkyrie 17. Pieced together from fragmentary reports culled from the last forty years you slowly begin to put the whole thing together. Drakenfeur, Heinrich and Reichsmuller. The badge pressed into your hand on the station at___________. And that last desperate call for help from the Glitz Hotel overlooking Lake Bruntz.

Your cover is good. Very good in fact. You spend a few days sniffing around and then head up towards Lake Bruntz. You check in to the Glitz Hotel. It's the last lead you have. You seem to be getting nowhere.

Then on your way to the bar you sense a movement in the shadows. You feel a blow on your temple. And everything goes black...

Valkyrie 17 is an Adventure featuring both graphic and text locations. You will meet several different characters some of whom may help you while others see your demise as their sole purpose in life.

Included in the pack is a comprehensive dossier on Valkyrie 17. On the reverse of the cassette tape are the answerphone messages. And then of course there's the game itself.

LOADING TIME	5½ minutes.	MICRODRIVE	X/FER FUNCTION
LOCATIONS	100+	FUN FACTOR 8	
LEVEL	?		
SOUND	Beep Beep		

HINTS

Watch your back, try not to get killed and mind your language.

The RamJam Corporation cannot accept responsibility for injury either mental or physical caused during the playing of Valkyrie 17. Furthermore the existence of these words affects your statutory rights.

VALKYRIE 17

Valkyrie 17 is distributed by Palace Virgin Gold, 69 Flempton Road, London E10 7NL. Telephone: 01-539 5566. Available from all leading wholesalers.

DOOMDARK'S Revenge

*The sequel to The Lords of Midnight is here — **Brendon Gore** braves the dangers and mysteries of the Icemark, home to Doomdark's daughter, Shareth the Heartstealer*

LUXOR THE MOONPRINCE, Rorthron the Wise and one thousand riders of the Houseguard of the Moon stand at the Gate of Varenorn looking north. It is dawn and the uncharted lands of the Icemark are bathed in a reddish glow. Somewhere ahead lies Shareth Heartstealer, Empress of the Frozen Empire and daughter of the late and unlamented Doomdark.

Following Luxor's victory over Doomdark at Ushgarak, Shareth swore bloody vengeance, for she had wanted the pleasure of killing her father herself. Accordingly, she enticed away Luxor's son Morkin, destroyer of the Ice Crown, with the aid of some powerful enchantments. Morkin is currently languishing in one of Shareth's less pleasant dungeons, still convinced that he is in love with the Heartstealer.

Tarithel the Fey, Morkin's beloved, has already crossed the frozen wastes and entered the lands of the Icemark in search of her knight errant. So starts the tale of *Doomdark's Revenge*, second in the Midnight trilogy and sequel to the highly acclaimed *Lords of Midnight*.



Mike Singleton's latest game for the 48K Spectrum (or Spectrum +) contains many features of the original, together with a number of new ingredients. There are an incredible six thousand locations in the world of Icemark, each of which can be viewed from eight different directions, yielding some forty-eight thousand scenes. This feat is achieved by the use of 'landscaping', a technique first seen in the *Lords of Midnight*.

At dawn, each of the Icemark's scenes is depicted in red. As the day progresses, the views change from red to light blue until the onset of night is signalled by a dark blue screen. Characters in adjacent locations appear in full colour.

There are five main peoples in the world of Icemark. The Men of Shareth's Frozen Empire lie in the North-east and the Kingdom of Giants in the North-west. The Kingdom of Dwarves lies to the East, between the Frozen Empire to the North and the forests of the Fey to the South. The Outlands of the Barbarians occupy the South-west. This area includes the Gate of Varenorn. None of the five races are particularly friendly towards each other, or even their own kind.

All manner of feuds and border disputes may set Giant against Giant as easily as against Dwarf or Fey. But the Fey are most likely to be friendly towards Luxor, the Ice-guard least likely.

If Luxor is to defeat Shareth, he must recruit allies to his banner. To this end, he must search out neighbouring armies and decide whether to attack, approach or avoid them. Approaching a Barbarian, or other character, and his army, may result in his joining Luxor's cause. Equally, it will put Luxor at a disadvantage



if the character decides to fight. Luxor must base his decision on what information he can glean about each character and his army.

As characters react to each other differently, Luxor must also decide whether to approach a strange army personally, or to use one of the other characters under his control. A Fey who would reject an approach from a Giant might accept the approach of another Fey. But this could also work in reverse. Only experience will tell Luxor who is most likely to recruit who.

A word of warning. Do not attempt to recruit Shareth Heartstealer. She will never rally to your banner.

There are a number of ways of winning the game. The simplest victory is to find Morkin and to return to Varenorn. This victory can be improved upon by returning with Tarithel and Rorthron. The Crowns of Icemark are also worth points, as are those objects which form the basis of Shareth's power.

But, all of these victories depend upon Luxor's safe return to Varenorn. If Luxor should be killed, Shareth wins automatically.

The ultimate victory is to kill Shareth and return to Varenorn with Luxor, Morkin, Tarithel and Rorthron. This will be acknowledged, when you press the Night key, by glowing letters revealing the ancient Watchwords of Midnight.

Mike Singleton has obviously learned from the *Lords of Midnight* — many people were disappointed to defeat Doomdark only to be greeted by the unremarkable message 'Victory to the Free'. Winning a game as absorbing and complicated as *Mid-*



Mike Singleton, centre, protected from fans by Simon Goodwin and Warren Foulkes of Beyond

night or *Doomdark's Revenge* deserves some sort of spectacular display.

When the game starts, Luxor faces a number of choices. He can journey to the North, through the Outlands, towards the Kingdom of Giants. Alternatively, he can head East towards the Kingdom of the Fey and perhaps attempt to link up with Tarithel. He can even enter the tunnel at the Gate of Varenorn and see where it leads him.

However, my first move as Luxor was to head South to the hills of Kahudrand and then South-west towards the forest of Varuleon. Next, South-west again to the plains of Berenium and then West to the fortress of Torinarg.

The Check Place key reveals that Torinarg the Barbarian is a good, strong, stubborn and brave fellow, if a little slow and greedy. His liege is Careneon the Barbarian and his foe is Ulformane the Giant. Torinarg commands 1,000 Barbarian riders and his fortress holds another 1,000.

The Choose key gives me the option of rest, attack or approach. I chose the approach option and was rewarded by recruit-



ing Torinarg to my cause. My first success.

Pressing the Choose key under the guise of Torinarg reveals the options of rest, recruiting riders or posting riders. Recruiting riders twice added another 200 men to Torinarg's command and reduced the garrison's strength to 800. Pressing the Choose key a third time only resulted in the options of resting or posting riders.

Rorthron I sent North, via the plains of Anvirel, to the tower of Thirand. Unfortunately, he found nothing, so I sent him North again to the temple of Imelash, which also yielded nothing. At this point, I changed direction and sent Rorthron East into the forest of Fenon. As night fell, Rorthron was standing in the forest looking into a mist which had fallen.

Mists are another innovation which Mike has added since *Lords of Midnight*. These mists, which descend periodically, block the landscape and sap the courage of all except Shareth's foeguard. They also provide cover for Shareth's armies.

Tarithel, in the meantime, was standing in the forest of Fangrim looking North. There being little of interest in any other direction, I duly sent her North to the stones of Imatreon. Needless to say, the stones concealed nothing, but a glance to the East revealed the presence of an army in the distance. With four hours of daylight left, I decided to investigate.

A couple of moves East revealed the fortress of the unlikely named Carorthand the Fey. He was good, strong, loyal, brave, etc, and commanded 1,000 Fey riders with another 1,000 inside the fortress.

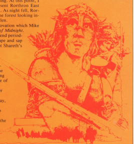
Interestingly, his liege turned out to be Imorthorn the Fey. Those of you who have read the booklet which accompanies *Doomdark's Revenge* will have noted that it was Imorthorn who sent warning of Shareth's intentions to the land of Midnight in the form of a message tied to a white falcon. Surely any of his subjects would be a good bet for an ally.

Consequently, I had Tarithel approach Carorthand, which resulted in my gaining another ally. However, pressing the Choose key in the form of Carorthand turned out to be surprisingly interesting. There were the usual options of rest, recruit riders and post riders. This added another 200 riders to Carorthand's command, leaving 800 in the fortress.

But, there was an additional option. Carorthand had offered the chance of taking the Crown of Imiriel whose power is in persuasion. Hoping that this would enable him to recruit even more people to my cause, I decided to take it.

At this point, I decided to press the Night key, allowing Shareth to move ▶





◀ When dawn broke, I moved Torinarg North to the hills of Kahudrand where he found trolls and killed them. Torinarg then continued North to the plains of Glorthim and then to the forest of Glangrak without incident. Night then fell for Torinarg.

Luxor followed in Torinarg's footsteps and decided to rest in the forest of Glangrak.

Rorthron moved North to the tower of Torinak where he found guidance — Thelak the Dwarf stands at the fortress of Thelak. Unfortunately, this is not a lot of use unless you know where the fortress of Thelak is located.

But, moving North, Rorthron cleared the mist and sighted an army in the distance. Continuing to move North, Rorthron discovered the fortress of Kahudrang the Barbarian with just one hour of daylight left.

Kahudrang, however, turned out to be evil and treacherous and his foe to be Luxor. Given that he commanded 1030 riders, with another 1000 in the fortress, Rorthron decided that discretion was the better part of valour and moved North-east to the hills of Morenak in a bid to escape detection.

Tarithel and Carorthand, meanwhile, thought they could detect the outlines of an army to the East of Carorthand's fortress. Sure enough, a few moves to the East revealed the city of Imorthorn, Carorthand's liege. He needed little persuading and soon joined the cause with another 1200 men.

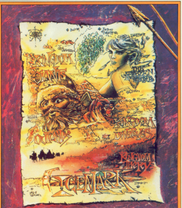
Only two days and Luxor's forces are growing to a respectable size. But then Shareth has undoubtedly been busy too.

Torinarg moves North to the Hall of Dolashang where he decides to rest, as does Luxor. Ahead lies the pit of Morudrane.

Rorthron survives the night unscathed. Looking South, back the way he has come, he sees a new army in the distance. Moving South he discovers Careneon the Barbarian who commands 1000 Barbarian warriors. Careneon is good, loyal and brave, but his liege is Kahudrang.

Nevertheless, Rorthron tries to recruit Careneon and is slightly surprised to discover he is successful. Flushed with this success, I decide to use Careneon to attempt to recruit Kahudrang. This is a mistake, as Kahudrang rejects Careneon's overtures and attacks him.





Rorthron moves North again, to the tower of Malangrash, in an attempt to get out of harm's way. He sees yet another army to the West, but night has fallen and he can make no attempt to recruit another ally who could help Careneon — or Kahudrang.

The party at Imorthorn, which consists of Imorthorn, Carorthand and Tarithel, spies a new army to the West at the hall of Glarane. They decide to send out Carorthand to investigate.

On his way West, Carorthand discovers the Sword of Thangrang, whose power is in battle. But, when he picks up the sword, he discovers that he has dropped the Crown of Imiriel. Given that he is trying to recruit someone, and that the Crown's power is in persuasion, he decides to keep the Crown.

Fortunately, the army to the West is led by Carorthane the Fey whose liege is Imorthorn. Carorthane is easily recruited and picks up the Sword of Thangrang on his way to the city of Imorthorn, where he adds another 200 riders to his existing 1000. Night falls.

I won't spoil the game for you by telling you much more of my progress, except to say that Careneon lost 55 warriors in battle but slew 205 of the foe in return. I have travelled from one side of Icemark to the other, discovered Morkin's location but not yet visited it, fought a pitched battle against Shareth and lost.

The world of Icemark holds as great a fascination as Midnight and perhaps even greater. It is not without flaws — trying to control eight or more characters starts to become difficult — but it is still far more absorbing and better fun to play than almost any other game around.

What the game really needs is some sort of group command, which would enable you to order groups of characters to perform the same action, such as rest, instead of having to laboriously type in the same command eight or more times. It would also be nice to have an overall battle report as well as reports on each individual commander.

My overall impression, however, remains one of awe. How Mike Singleton has managed to pack so much into 48K is a mystery.

Ah well, back to the fray. Shareth may have won this time, but I can always reload and fight the battle again. Maybe this time I will win.

Program	:	*Doomdark's Revenge*
Cost	:	*£9.95*
Micro	:	*Spectrum 48K*
Supplier	:	*Beyond*

NEWS DESK

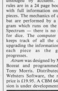
If you think you've something newsworthy, call 01-437 4343 and let us know

ATRAM

ATRAM — standing for *Advanced Tactical Reconnaissance and Attack Mission* — is a computer moderated wargame for two players. Simulating a NATO training exercise, one player is the Royal Navy, and the other is the US Marine Corps. Each side has Harrier fighters and bombers, aircraft carriers, SAM batteries and a tanker plane; the objective is to destroy 15 strategic targets in the enemy's half of the board.

The board is large — 31" × 21½" — and the pieces are magnetic, so they cannot be dislodged by accident. The rules are in a 24 page booklet with full information on the pieces. The mechanics of combat are performed by a program which runs on the 48K Spectrum — there is no need for dice. The computer also keeps track of all the data, upgrading the information for each piece as the game progresses.

Atram was designed by Mike Bozeat and programmed by Tony Morris. Distributed by Websters Software, the retail price is £19.95. A CBM 64 version is under development.



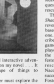
Novel games from Trillium

WHS Distributors, part of W H Smith & Son, is distributing a range of American interactive adventure games in the UK. All five games in the series are tied in to science fiction or fantasy titles by well known authors.

Fahrenheit 451 is a sequel to the famous novel by Ray Bradbury. Guy Montag, the renegade Fireman with a passion for Literature, must battle to restore the freedom to read to a bookless world.

Rendezvous with Rama, is, according to Arthur C Clarke,





"a splendid interactive adventure based on my novel . . . It is the shape of things to come."

The player must explore the alien artefact named Rama, and return home with the information.

Michael Crichton, bestselling author of *The Andromeda Strain*, has contributed *Amazon*, involving a solo expedition into the Amazon jungle to rescue a lost safari and to find an ancient treasure filled city.

Dragonworld is apparently written by the authors of the eponymous fantasy novel, Byron Preiss and Michael Reaves; it revolves around the quest of Amsel of Fandora to rescue the Last Dragon.

The last of the five titles, *Shadowkeep*, is something of a reversal — instead of being based on a book, it inspired one. The game, which is described as a role playing fantasy game, revolves around the player's attempts to penetrate the fortress Shadowkeep, infested with evil monsters, to rescue the good wizard Nacomedon. The game was so successful that Alan Dean Foster, doyen of the film novelisation, was commissioned to write 'the book of the game'.

Trillium's future releases will include Robert Heinlein's *Starman Jones*, and Roger Zelazny's *Nine Princes in Amber*.

All the Trillium games are on two discs, for CBM 64 or the Apple II. They cost £19.95.

L9 in paradise

LEVEL 9 will have MSX versions of all their adventures by mid December, according to Pete Austin.

Commodore 64 and BBC B disc versions for the entire range are also available, at £11.95. Owners of cassette versions can swap them for discs by returning the cassette with £2.50.

The next adventure from the High Wycombe based software house will be *Emerald Isle*, a fantasy set on a desert island, which will be available at the end of December.

January will see the launch of *The Price of Magic*, set, according to Pete, "in a Lovecraftian type background.

"The player learns to become a magician, but as he does his sanity and his health decay. After a certain point, he won't be able to stand the light. The objective is to become the ruler of an ancient decaying mansion, most of which is underground."

Both games will apparently be slightly smaller than standard Level 9 adventures — "more along the lines of *Erik the Viking*," says Pete — and will be text and graphics. They will run on the Commodore 64, Spectrum 48K, BBC B and Amstrad. No price has been decided yet.

Fans of the *Silicon Dreams* series will be delighted to hear that the sequel to *Snowball* and *Return to Eden*, *The Worm in Paradise*, will be released at Easter 1985. It will be text and graphics, and it will run on the usual wide range of machines.

Eureka

THE RESPONSE to the *Eureka* competition in our November issue has been overwhelming — the largest entry ever. The deadline is the last working day in January so even more people have a chance to enter. The results will be announced in our February issue.

Channel 8

THE NEXT three games in Channel 8's Mysterious Adventure series are *Midwinter*, *After the Fire*, and *Beyond the Infinite*. They will be released in January 1985 on the Spectrum 48K and Commodore 64. Versions for the BBC B, Dragon 32 and Amstrad will follow.

The price for all Mysterious Adventures has been reduced to £6.95.

Infocom Plus 4

COMMODORE UK will be distributing Infocom's entire range of games for the Plus 4, and probably for the Commodore 64 as well, according to Chris West, Commodore UK's software development manager. This follows an agreement between Commodore UK's American parent company and Infocom, allowing Commodore to repackage the games, cutting down slightly on the amount of support material.

For the British customer, with Commodore 64 or Plus 4 and disc drives, this deal means that all the Infocom range will eventually be available at £11.99. The *Zork* trilogy, *Starcross, Suspended* and *Deadline* are already out.

Commodore UK has also been given the rights to the Scott Adams' *Questprobe* series, based on the Marvel comic universe, on disc. Adventure International UK will still be publishing cassette versions of the games.

Adventure Writer — US Quill

HELP is finally at hand for frustrated adventure writers with an Apple or an Atari — the CodeWriter Corporation is marketing disc based versions of *The Quill* for those machines, and for the Commodore 64, in the UK. The package is sold under the American name *Adventure Writer*, and costs £24.95.

CodeWriter now has the worldwide distribution rights to *Adventure Writer* and will be marketing foreign language versions of the program. All the major European languages will be catered for — and negotiations to produce Japanese and Hebrew versions are well advanced. Greek and Arabic versions are also planned.

According to Graham Lomax, CodeWriter UK's marketing director, "*Adventure Writer* is selling the best of all our range in America — and it's selling well over here too, especially on the Atari."

Only minor changes have been made to the original program, but the accompanying booklet is substantially different, reflecting the American orientation of the package. Also included on the disc is *Sorcerer*, a *Quill*ed adventure written by Gilsoft to demonstrate how the program works.



CodeWriter in America has already launched a compendium disc with three *Quill*ed (or *Adventure Written*) games on it, *Night of the Walking Dead, Perils of Darkest Africa,* and *Revenge of the Moon Goddess*. Whether this disc will be released in the UK has not yet been decided.

Gilsoft is still marketing the cassette version of *The Quill*, and will be publishing it for the Amstrad early in 1985, according to Howard Gilberts, the company's founder.

The launch date for *The Illustrator*, the graphics authoring system compatible with *The Quill*, is December 5, 1984. This allows the creation of text and graphics adventures. Available initially for the Spectrum 48K, with a CBM version planned for later, *The Illustrator* is £14.95.

Gilsoft has also converted the Gold Range of *Quill*ed adventures for the CBM 64, and has released the eighth in the series, *The Curse*. The Commodore tapes have Nova-load.

Also scheduled for release from Gilsoft early in 1985 are two adventures, *The Hollow* and *Madcap Manor*. Both are text only. All Gilsoft's adventures cost £5.95.

Commenting on *Adventure Writer*, Howard Gilberts said "it's like cornflakes really — different people sell them but what's in the package is the same."

Bargains of Ket

WITH the release of *The Final Mission*, Incentive's *Ket* trilogy is now complete — and anybody who hasn't got in on the act yet can do so at a saving. Incentive are offering a presentation gift set containing the three adventures — *The Mountains of Ket, The Temple of Vran,* and *The Final Mission* — at £12.95, a saving of £3.55 on the usual price of the three games.

For those of you who may not know, the first person to score 100% on all three games and decode the secret message will win a £400 video recorder.

The Ket Trilogy run on the Spectrum 48K.

If you are still stuck in *Temple of Vran* turn to the Classified page — Incentive are giving away some answers!



Games Fair

READERS interested in Role Playing Games take note: ***Games Fair '85*** *is on the weekend of 29, 30 and 31 March 1985 at Reading University.*

Gary Gygax, who wrote ***Dungeons and Dragons****, will be special guest.*

Admission is by ticket only and numbers are limited, so if you want to go, contact TSR UK, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge.

Residential tickets are £29.00, and non residential tickets are £8.00. The entrance fee for the UK ***Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*** *Championships is £1.50.*

There may be no computers there, but ***Dungeons and Dragons*** *is what inspired Crowther and Woods to write* ***Adventure*** *. . .*

CBS

CBS Electronics Software is marketing a number of packages from the US software house Epyx.

Three titles are likely to be of interest to adventure gamers; *Dragonriders of Pern*, based on Anne McCaffery's best selling series, *Temple of Apshai*, and *Gateway to Apshai*.

Dragonriders is an arcade/strategy game set on a distant planet, which requires cunning diplomacy and ruthlessness.

Temple of Apshai involves a single player in the exploration of a series of dungeon rooms occupied by various monsters, in search of fabulous treasure.

The third game, *Gateway to Apshai*, the sequel to *Temple of Apshai*, will be released early in 1985.

All three games are for the Commodore 64. *Temple of Apshai* is £14.95 on cassette, and £17.95 on disc. *Dragonriders of Pern* and *Gateway to Apshai* are priced at £8.95 cassette and £11.95 disc.

Elite

THE *ELITE* auction is over, and the rights to produce Z80 based versions of Acornsoft's cult hit space simulation have been bought by Firebird, British Telecom's software arm.

James Leavy, Firebird's Marketing Manager, says that "Spectrum and Amstrad versions of *Elite* are in preparation, and we are looking at the MSX."

Firebird are looking for adventures to publish in both the budget Silver Range and the Gold Range. *Elite* will be in the Gold Range, at around £15.00.

An Elite crew

Martin Croft talks to Ian Bell and David Braben, the authors of Acornsoft's Elite

"TO WRITE a good graphic game, you have to exploit the full potential of the machine. It's a true measure of programming skill, while writing good adventure games is a measure of your creativity — you might as well be writing a novel."

Strong words, perhaps, but the speaker, Ian Bell, can back them up. Ian and David Braben, both third year students at Jesus College, Cambridge, are the authors of *Elite*, the space trading and combat simulation game likely to be Acornsoft's most successful game of 1984.

"*Elite* is really a combat game," claims Ian. "The trading was put in to hang the combat on — but we've found that, with the trading sequences, people can really identify with the commander."



Ian Bell

For those who may not have read the review of *Elite* in December's *Micro Adventurer*, the game is easy to describe. The player is the pilot and owner of a small cargo carrying spaceship. While docked at the space stations orbiting the multitude of different worlds that go to make up the eight galaxies in the *Elite* universe, he or she can buy or sell cargo, or re-equip the spacecraft. Commodities bought on one world for peanuts might be worth a fortune on another planet. As the player trades from planet to planet, the amount of money in the bank should steadily climb, allowing the purchase of more, and deadlier, weapons.

It is between the worlds that these weapons are needed — in the voids of space lurk many dangers, ranging from asteroids to pirates to Thargoids — murderous aliens from another galaxy!

In fact, as David pointed out, "there are 32 objects in all, including cargo pods, escape capsules, and asteroids."

Ian and David started working on *Elite* in July 1983. Most of the programming was done in vacations. Once they had something they could demonstrate, they took it along to Acornsoft — "primarily to get David a BBC," says Ian.

It may come as a surprise to many readers to hear that neither Ian nor David has attained the coveted Elite ranking, the ultimate objective for all commanders.

"Actually," admits Ian, "we've never bothered — writing games is much more fun than playing them."

Most of the playtesting on *Elite* was done, according to the authors, by Acornsoft's Managing Director, David Johnson-Davies. After playtesting, Acornsoft gave *Elite* a lot of support. 20,000 copies have already been sold, and £50,000 has been spent on promoting the game, including television advertising.

Part of the promotion campaign is a competition in which everybody who reaches Dangerous can enter. The best half dozen or so will fight it out for the title of the universe's best combateer. Acornsoft has had hundreds of entries, and at least 55 people have reached Elite status.

The rating system, according to David and Ian, is based entirely on combat skill — the amount of money players make by canny trading does not affect it at all (except by allowing the purchase of more powerful weaponry).

"The BBC B is a good machine to program on," claims Ian. "It's certainly the best development machine around, far better than the Spectrum 48K or the Commodore 64."

David and Ian should know — they are working on the conversion of *Elite* for the Commodore 64 at the moment.

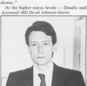
"We've also written a version of the game for the BBC B with the add-on 6502 processor and disc drive," says David. "It will have four colour screen displays for the top half of the screen, and eight colours for the instrument panel on the bottom half. It will also have extra features, like more ships."

The expanded *Elite* will be available around Easter. The Commodore 64 version will have similar features, says Ian.

"It will be akin to the BBC second processor version. More colourful, but slower."

At the higher status levels — Deadly and

Acornsoft MD David Johnson-Davies



Elite — players may find themselves being sent on missions by Her Majesty's Space Navy. Ian and David will be building on this idea for the sequel to *Elite*, which goes under the working title of *Elite II*.

They hasten to make it absolutely clear that the sequel will be a completely different game.

According to Ian, "we are re-writing completely from scratch — it's not just going to be the same game with different planets, nothing sordid like that."

In the sequel, players will be able to use their favourite commanders from *Elite*, by using the save routine included in the game.



David Braben

While on the subject of saved commanders, the answer to a question puzzling many *Elite* fanatics. When you begin to play the game, the commanders name is Jameson — why?

"It's a good name, and it's got seven letters, which is the maximum you can use for identifying your commander," says Ian. "Also, in *Traveller* (a science fiction role playing game, like *Dungeons and Dragons* only in space) Jameson is the name given to the sample character used to show how to create characters."

Both Ian and David used to play role playing games — Ian *Traveller*, and David *Space Opera*, also with a science fiction setting — and some elements of *Elite*, notable the trading sequences and the political profiles for the planets, obviously owe their genesis to this.

Neither author, however, still plays RPGs, and both stress that *Elite* is as original as any computer game can be.

Now that the Z80 rights to *Elite* have been bought by no less an organisation than British Telecom, it looks set to become one of the classic computer games of all times. If the BBC and Electron can support projected unit sales of around 100,000, then the number that will be sold when *Elite* is available for more popular micros like the Spectrum (or the Commodore 64) will be huge. Until then though BBC and Electron owners will find themselves with a lot of new friends, all wanting to try *Elite*.

Ian and David, however, are more concerned with their final exams right at the moment. The success of *Elite* has had little effect on their lives as yet — no royalties have come through. But then, *Elite* was more of a labour of love than anything else; as Ian comments, "we'd probably have been sitting in our rooms playing with computers anyway." □

Adventurous Erik exits Norse

*Mosaic bring Terry Jones' Erik the Viking to your micro — **John Fraser** reports from the fjords*

WHEN I first heard that *The Saga of Erik the Viking* was based on the highly praised childrens' book by Monty Python star Terry Jones, I half expected Erik himself to be a sort of Nordic John Cleese, strutting about the screen dressed in furs and a Viking helmet.

In fact the game is a faithful adaptation of the book which vividly recounts the *Second Saga of Erik*, a viking warrior who lived around a thousand years ago. The Saga tells of Erik's search for the evil Dogfighters who have kidnapped his family. On his travels he meets numerous mythical beings such as the evil Enchantress of the Fjord and the Old Man of the Sea, as well as the ever popular wizards, dragons and giants.

Yet despite the legendary nature of his exploits, the historical setting is absolutely genuine. In the game you can explore around 200 locations, many of which are illustrated with what are arguably the most impressive and authentic scenes to have appeared in a Spectrum adventure.

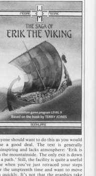
Mosaic's interpretation has been more firmly established with several games based on science fiction stories and novels by well known writers. With *Erik*, however, you don't get the book with the game which is a shame.

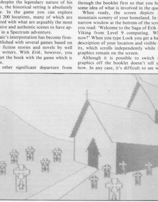
One other significant departure from Mosaic's book-based adventures is that *Erik* is primarily a graphic adventure and was programmed by Level 9, a name more usually associated with long and challenging text adventures.

The cassette comes in a large, strong box with one of the book's fine illustrations on the cover. The accompanying 22 page instruction booklet is mostly comprised of extracts from the book, while the instructions themselves occupy a total of eight pages, six of which relate to loading on the BBC, Spectrum and Commodore machines. The playing hints are briefly covered in two pages and provide you with just sufficient information to get you started. Unless you cannot wait to play the game it would be more beneficial to read through the booklet first so that you have some idea of what is involved in the quest.

When ready, the screen depicts the mountain scenery of your homeland. In the narrow window at the bottom of the screen you read: 'Welcome to the Saga of Erik the Viking from Level 9 computing. What now?' When you type Look you get a basic description of your location and visible exits, which scrolls independently while the graphics remain on the screen.

Although it is possible to switch the graphics off the booklet doesn't tell you how. In any case, it's difficult to see why





anyone should want to do this as you would lose a good deal. The text is generally uninspiring and lacks atmosphere: 'Erik is on the mountainside. The only exit is down to a path.' Still, the facility is quite a useful one when you've just retraced your steps for the umpteenth time and want to move on quickly. It's not that the graphics take long to be drawn, they don't, but you can't type in any instructions until they have been completed.

The game has a wide vocabulary and a small selection of words are listed in the booklet. To save you having to type in the name of each object you wish to pick up, you can follow 'Take' or 'Drop' with 'everything', although it would have been more convenient to have had the shorter 'Take all'. Another point regarding taking or dropping things is that the program doesn't tell you when the action has been performed. Instead of the usual 'OK' message you get 'What now?', but type 'Inventory' and you'll see the object is in your possession.

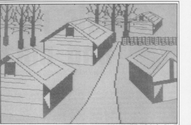
With Level 9's careful mapping it's possible to go back to previous locations and explore Viking settlements with considerable freedom of movement. Around 20 or so locations may be visited before you finally set sail in your Viking longship *The Golden*

Dragon and journey to strange new lands. Your immediate objective is to collect whatever you will need for the voyage. To do this you'll need to examine everything you find thoroughly as many objects are concealed within other objects. Next, it's vital to ensure that the ship is seaworthy before you drag it down to the beach, a feat which cannot be accomplished alone.

As I've no wish to spoil your enjoyment of the game, I don't propose to enlighten you further except to suggest you write to Mosaic for a clue sheet, which is all you are told to do when you type Help. Should you accept this offer Mosaic will supply (on receipt of a sae) an alphabetical list of objects, creatures and places together with what virtually amounts to the complete solution.

Now a word of warning. On my review copy the text sometimes filled the communication window and ran onto the cursor line so that I couldn't enter any instructions until I pressed caps shift. Once, the text refused to scroll and after stabbing at the Spectrum keyboard for a while, the program crashed.

Despite any problems which may have been encountered, the game achieved almost instant fame. Just two weeks after its launch in autumn 1984 it reached WH Smiths' Spectrum Games Top Ten list and has already been reprinted to meet demand. Smiths' also hosted their very first signing session for software with Terry Jones.



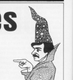
While the game owes much to the splendid childrens' book on which it is based, it is also (as Terry Jones has remarked himself) an extension of the book rather than simply a retelling of the story. What's more, *Erik* is one of the few adventure games I've seen which not only entertains but educates as well, as it's very likely to stimulate further interest in the Vikings.

By the time you read this Christmas will be over, so why not spend the extra cash you were given on *Erik*. All the family will probably want to play it too, even those people with a natural aversion for graphic adventures. Although you don't get the book included in the package (that costs another £6.95) the game has a fascination all of its own and will take some time to solve.

I can't think of a better way to spend these long dark nights than journeying to Scandinavia. □



Logic puzzles and mazes

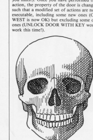


***Richard Bartle** considers some of the problems of the land of Mud*

THERE ARE two particular kinds of problem commonly encountered in adventure programs which typically cause tempers to become frayed and arguments to develop the moment they are discussed. The spread of opinion regarding them is almost binary — you either love 'em or you hate 'em — and liking one has no influence on whether or not you'll like the other. I'm referring to the notions of mazes and logic puzzles. Augh! See what I mean?

What is the sort of problem you normally get in an adventure game? Well even in a multi-player one like *MUD*, the basic arrangement is that you have a collection of objects, the presence and properties of which either allow or disallow the execution of commands (which I'll call actions). Actions, once carried out, alter certain objects in predefined ways, and so create a different set of restrictions which determine what actions can be performed afterwards.

So a closed door might restrict you from performing the "GO WEST" action, say. In order to GO WEST you need to perform some action which changes the state of the door such that it is no longer closed, and the obvious one is something like UNLOCK DOOR WITH KEY (don't say I never give you hints!). Once you have performed this action, the property of the door is changed such that a modified set of actions are now executable, including some new ones (GO WEST is now OK) but excluding some old ones (UNLOCK DOOR WITH KEY won't work this time!).



So you can look on actions as having preconditions, which are tests on the objects required for the action to be satisfactorily carried out. One precondition of opening the door with the keys is that you have to have the keys, for example, and if they weren't on you then you'd have to give some command which made it so you did have them (GET KEYS FROM BAG, perhaps).

This is a very basic outline of what the mechanism is behind adventures, and put this way (in terms borrowed from the Artificial Intelligence subfield of "planning", which just happens to be my specialisation) it sounds pretty mundane! The skill and fun in playing comes from imposing an interesting structure on the actions and objects, so that you're not mindlessly trying out all possible commands but can use your intelligence to find the right thing to do. Without this logical structure binding the universe together, there's no guarantee that ANY command might do something. Common sense might dictate that INVENTORY isn't likely to open a door for you, so you probably wouldn't try it (unless you were absolutely desperate!), but if you treat it like any other action then why shouldn't it? It's just another command. Why shouldn't something like CLOSE DOOR WITH KEYS open the door either, come to that?

It's because of this logical structure, of course. You assume that the players have a certain collection of common commands at their disposal, and you try to mimic these commands so the results are what players expect. So making the command to open a door be CLOSE is generally regarded as the result of not having been to sleep the previous four nights! Things like having INVENTORY open a door had better be accompanied by generous clues; not so basic as a scroll reading "DO AN INVENTORY IN ROOM X AND IT'LL OPEN THE DOOR" perhaps, but certainly it would be OK to have something which noted the remarkable similarity between the body movements needed to do an inventory and those needed for an OPEN DOOR spell. Even CLOSE for OPEN might be acceptable in an "inverted" world, as in through a mirror.

So what's this got to do with mazes and logic puzzles? Well these two ideas stretch the definition of what people do in adventures to the limit, and for some people it's just too far! And what has it to do with *MUD?* Well in multi-user games the limits change (your patience goes, for a start!) and it's interesting to see how the extremes carry over, to see the extent of the shift in what is or isn't a good thing to include.

Take puzzles, for example. By these I don't mean finding novel uses for ordinary items (like "LIGHT BRAND FROM DRAGON", then "BURN DOOR WITH BRAND") but genuine, straight puzzles. It won't let you through the door unless you can solve the problem "2+2=?". Well that's easy enough, it's, er, 4, but what if they were much harder? What about the square root of 6023921858319047472771692203936249? It might take some time to figure out it's 77613928249503307 . . . Or what about naming the 142812th prime number? Or cracking a substitution code?

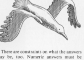


These are problems which have occurred in *MUD*. Since I don't actually LIKE the idea of anyone having to go away for an hour then coming back with the answers, I make sure that solving them is not essential to the game. *MUD* has a room, the mausoleum, with around six or seven other rooms off it. Each of these rooms (tombs) is accessible only through one door (unless you're a wiz, when you can fly there of course!), and on the door is a puzzle. Solve the puzzle, the door opens, and in you rush to claim your reward.

Not all the puzzles are pure computation, of course; some of them are "armchair" ones which you can solve on the spot if you're quick (or never if you're not!). These can be things like the roman numeral substitution of "104, 49, be polite" or involve well known sequences scrumpled up in some way ("AnEbArPrAyUnUl??" — months of the year). I won't list them all

because you'll probably find them as boring as I do, even though it would give the *Micro Adventurer* editors something they could use to illustrate this article! The mausoleum has gone through several generations of problems (all of which were/are original), because it turns out that this kind of thing is NOT suitable in multi-user games.

Put bluntly, people exchange answers with each other so readily that it's only a couple of days after one of them has been cracked before everyone knows! Even if you don't tell people, the chances are that someone will snoop on you while you're in the mausoleum typing in the fruits of your hard-earned labour, and then distribute the answers to whoever wants to know!



There are constraints on what the answers may be, too. Numeric answers must be pretty big or people will just type in all the likely integers until they get the one which is right. So although I thought *MUD*'s sequence of lengths of sides of right-angled triangles problem was pretty nifty — ''4, 11, 60; 3, 5, 11; 5, 13, ??'' — it took less than a minute for someone to count from 0 to 61 and get the answer! Groan! I do occasionally relent and have lowish numbers as answers, but not often! Also, ''clever'' hints like making substitution code questions always start off with a ''wh-'' word (''what'', ''which'', ''where'' etc) soon get around too, and before you know it even the thickies can solve your problems. Grr!

Apart from the mausoleum, *MUD* has no other problems of this kind. I like to keep them in their place, where they can't interfere with the rest of play, but some players love them! Especially since what is in each room behind the doors varies between games and you never know quite what to expect there.

But why is it most people DO prefer to give away these solutions, when they keep the usual kind of answer to the ''how you get to room X'' problems to themselves? It is, of course, because the majority of them find it intensely irritating not to be able to get some treasure just because of a smarmy problem which they KNOW how to solve but which takes them ages to do, or which they can't ''see'' instantaneously and there's no clue anywhere which would hint at the answer.

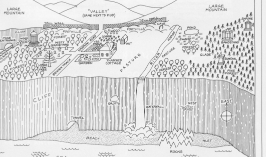
Their objection is the same as mine, in that you need ''outside'' knowledge to solve the wretched things. ''Outside knowledge'' is needed anyway, but it's one thing to assume people know that it's keys that open doors and not bottles of medicine, and another to assume they can solve second-order differential equations. At least with normal problems you CAN try ever possible combination of objects until you get the one which opens the door, but unless you twigged maybe that the number

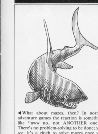


sequence was treble scores on a dartboard, or that the letters were initials of streets on a monopoly board, you'd never solve a logic puzzle.

So, as you can probably tell by now, I'm not too keen on this kind of problem, and in multi-user games it's certainly NOT a very good idea! The only reason *MUD* still has the mausoleum is because I like setting them! However, you can have raging arguments with people who adore this IQ stuff, as it breaks up the monotony of ''find it and try it'' play. Oh well, what you win on the swings . . . ▶

By popular demand, we reprint this panoramic view of the Land, which appeared in the first of Richard's articles.





◀What about mazes, then? In normal adventure games the reaction is something like "aww no, not ANOTHER one!". There's no problem-solving to be done; you see, it's a cinch to solve mazes once you know how, but it takes ages. The situation is similar to having two objects which need to be in a certain room together positioned as far away from that room and each other as possible. It's just trekking time to get them to the same place, and there's no intellectual difficulty in that! Some mazes might be tricky, like they spell out a magic word or something, but they still need to be mapped. The standard technique of dropping objects to disambiguate rooms and then trying all directions is a pretty boring occupation, especially if you just KNOW there's a pirate or a magpie or something that's going to pick up some stuff and muck you up, secreting their booty away somewhere for you to seek out later.

In comparison with the dismal translation of logic problems into *MUD*, which (if you can comprehend such an idea!) are even WORSE here than in normal adventures, the translation of mazes works quite well! *MUD* has two major mazes and two minor ones. The minor ones are small, four or five rooms, and stop people from dropping objects in them to make maps by the simple expedient of not letting them take any in with them! Including a light source! They're fairly easy to solve, and they ought to be because in general you want to get back quick because you left a pile of essential items outside before entering!

The major maze which is entered the most in *MUD* is the graveyard, which isn't really a maze at all because you can never get lost in it, it's just confusing (you THINK you're lost!). It comprises around 10 rooms, but there are no loops. That means that if you're in, say, the third room then seven directions will take you back to the third room and one will take you to the fourth room, and so on. So by trying random directions you'll eventually get through (it takes about three goes "round the clock" — n, ne, e, se, . . . — to work through). There's even a magical item to help you, a statuette of a lion with "drop me in the garden of death to find the path" written on it. So why's it confusing? Because although you're in the same room, the description changes. If you give a dud direction and wind up back where you were, it's hard to tell because the gravestone has changed (gravestones, you'll recall from an earlier article, bear the names and epitaphs of wizs). The description even changes if you LOOK! So it's hard to find out what room you're in unless you take a whole sackful of goodies in with you so you can tell the rooms apart.

And this, of course, is where *MUD*'s multi-user aspect comes in! As there are no loops it's pretty easy to follow someone without their knowing you're there, and hence you can clear up after them, collecting their objects. They're not going to get back to pick them up for some time, so it's quite easy — especially if you know the way already! This was a design decision for the graveyard, to exploit *MUD*'s multi-user capabilities — the maze is easy to solve, but risky! There's no mindless, animated pirate to nick your treasure and hide it away, but instead the awful possibility of a real person grabbing hold of it and putting it where you'll never find it ever again!

The graveyard was put to great use by Gwyn the Wizard in his mortal days while he was working his way up to that exalted rank. It's quite easy for novices to wander in accidentally, and it takes them a while to find how to get out (you type the direction OUT!). So Gwyn would wait at the start of the maze, slaughter anyone who wandered in, then run deeper in and go to sleep. Going to sleep gets you back lost stamina points from fights, and is usually very dangerous in case anyone stumbles across you. But who's going to find you in a maze?!

MUD's other major maze is not so easy, though. It's possibly the most devious, cunning part of the whole game which exploits to the full the fact that there is more than one person playing at once. Most people don't even realise it's a maze, it's well disguised, although some regulars have heard rumours of the incredibly valuable crown said to lie in the centre. Of those who know its true meaning, only a handful have ever made it to the middle except by sheer accident, but the reward has been worth it. This maze is the swamp.

The swamp in *MUD*, in case you've forgotten (or were unwise enough not to buy the copy of the *Micro Adventurer* which explained it all to you!) is where you drop treasure to score points. If you have something valuable, worth 80 points say, then you don't score for it until you drop it in the swamp (yes, it's also a good place for ambushes!). It then sinks to the bottom and is out of play for everyone. Now the swamp is a maze, right? So how do you map a maze? Easy, drop stuff in so when you return to a room you know you've been there before. Only what happens to things you drop in the swamp? Yes, they sink! There are absolutely NO objects in *MUD* which you can let go off in the swamp and be able to see them, they ALL sink. Good, eh?

Well yes, but now it's pretty well impossible to solve isn't it? Well no, as not quite *everything* sinks in the swamp: players don't. If you want to map the swamp you have to use real people as markers. You can't do *that* in a normal adventure game!

Just to make it harder, the route through the swamp changes every game . . . I've snooped on people discussing it and stating they've heard it changes every 90 seconds, but it's not quite THAT cruel! There are scores of possible ways through, though, but only one of which is the one for the particular game you're in at any instant. So mapping in one game to get through again in the next is infeasible.

What's the reward for your efforts, then? Well in a drier part of the swamp, some seven or eight rooms in (it varies) is the crown. Unless some wiz watching your pioneering progress was wicked enough to substitute it with the dummy crown from the wiz's STORE, you now have the most valuable treasure in *MUD!* The people who acted as markers have nothing for their pains, though, and will need bribing with lesser treasures to stop their lynching you (unless you quit pretty soon after you drop it, but then they'll rip you to pieces next game!).

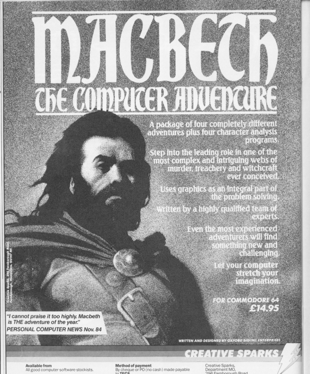
Mazes, then, transfer over to multi-user games quite well. In ordinary games they're boring at the best of time, but multi-user aspects make them actually quite enjoyable! Contrast this with the case for logic puzzles, which are much worse in *MUDs* than single-user games. It is interesting to speculate on the effects of porting other single-user features into multi-user games. This is a side-effect of the shift in perspective which *MUD*'s unique multi-user capabilities provide — if things are to be solved by individuals then they don't work as well as things to be solved in teams. It's as if the players WANT to help each other, but are thwarted in single-user games by the fact there's no-one else there!

I wonder what the effects of graphics would be? No, on second thoughts, having seen Egor the Wizard in real life, perhaps it's a bad idea! □

For those readers with a Commodore 64 and modem, *MUD* is now running on Compunet.

Readers without access to Compunet can get details of how to access *MUD* from Richard Bartle, Department of Computer Science, Essex University, Colchester, Essex CO4 3SQ. Remember to enclose an SAE.




MACBETH
THE COMPUTER ADVENTURE
A package of four completely different adventures plus four character analysis programs.
Step into the leading role in one of the most complex and intriguing webs of murder, treachery and witchcraft ever conceived.
Uses graphics as an integral part of the problem solving.
Written by a highly qualified team of experts.
Even the most experienced adventurers will find something new and challenging.
Let your computer stretch your imagination.
FOR COMMODORE 64
£14.95
"I cannot praise it too highly. Macbeth is THE adventure of the year."
PERSONAL COMPUTER NEWS Nov. 84
WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY OXFORD DIGITAL ENTERPRISES
CREATIVE SPARKS

The Adams adventure continues

***Ken Matthews** looks at Pyramid of Doom, Ghost Town, and Savage Island I in his continuing series on Scott Adams*

BEFORE I begin this month I'd like to thank all you Adventurers out there who have phoned and sent your comments about the series so far. I've had no unkind remarks yet — unless the Editor is sparing me the embarrassment. I'm very pleased to see that the time I've spent solving these classics has helped others at last.

For any newcomers, the phone-in Adventureline is still available to give instant help on Scott Adams and many other adventures. So please call (0474-334008) or write in to me at *Micro Adventurer* — with an SAE if you need a reply. This article is the third in the series so if you require the last two, concerning adventures 1-7, please order back issues from the address inside the front cover.

Still, enough preamble, I'm sure (I hope) many of you are waiting for the latest hints — so on with the job!

Pyramid of Doom

We start with *Pyramid of Doom*, where Scott really begins putting us through our paces as the adventures become increasingly more difficult.

You begin in a desert near the ancient pyramid, to which you, the grave robber, seek safe access. The desert, of course, is very hot so you might begin by filling your canteen or even try a refreshing dip. The desert can hold many secrets and a little delving could uncover some of them. The pharoahs were very jealous of their relics and famous for their skill in protecting their tombs against violation — Scott's pyramid is no exception but a little caution should see you safely inside.



A preliminary exploration will show many items, but none of the treasures you are expecting are immediately visible. As with every adventure, it is essential to examine everything at least once and clean up anything that seems a little too dirty to handle — but, sometimes, poking too far into the relics of ancient Egypt could prove fatal!

You may encounter an enigmatic oyster and a rather suspicious basket — get on with it! — are you an adventurer or just a fakir?

At least you'll have found somewhere to store the treasures if you've read the message right. Fancy some tasty camel jerky — Ugh! It's no use to you of course, but there's more than one creature about, which is the hungriest?



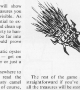
And now the inevitable mummy, he seems pretty lively but you might find some way to dampen his enthusiasm and gain the first obvious treasure. A number of items are now revealed and that skull definitely has a winning smile.

A walled up door could present a problem but there's no use holding back — a velvet glove is no good at all . . . Feeling around, dazzled by your own brilliance? Eeee! You clever devil — you're getting the hang of it now.

Giving someone a hand (?) could give you a lift up towards a dismal cell and your meeting with the most puzzling aspect of the game — the celebrated purple worm. Be careful is all I'll say, it's very easy to die here. Apart from that, you're on your own, don't spend too much time here though — there's plenty more to do elsewhere.

There's no one to help you on the ledge but it could be a good place to lose a couple of things, especially a ubiquitous Arab nuisance.

At last! A throne room. The really valuable treasures must be close at hand. Don't get too flushed with success! — at least, not yet. The mural is the clue and what I'll add is, "roses are red, hearts are red, so are . . ." If you're not too possessive you'll see your troubles melt away, not before your eyes but close by.



The rest of the game should be quite straightforward if you've got this far and all the treasures will be stored safely. See — the worm wasn't that much of a problem was it?

Ghost Town

The next item on the agenda, *Ghost Town*, is a slight departure from Scott's usual style in that it contains a bonus scoring system. This routine awards extra points if you complete the puzzles in the correct order. It is still possible to finish the adventure if the order is wrong but those of you who enjoy going over things again will have fun sorting this out. I don't know the correct sequence, so, if any of you do — let me know.

The game starts you off in a deserted Ghost Town and once more treasures must be found and stored.

Once again you might like to begin by having a drink to fortify your spirits, but you just might bump into one once you make your presence known. If you're armed, don't shoot the piano player . . . Show a little appreciation even if he plays a few bum notes; you probably can't do any better — or can you? Too much vanity could be fatal though — it's up to you to get this one taped.

In the stable, your horse, 'ole paint, is waiting for you but he's not quite roadworthy yet, as you'll discover if you get to that point. This one has an attractive answer although you'll probably end up in something far less wholesome. Still, down doesn't necessarily mean out — it might be better to look in.

The telegraph office is a more solid problem — a safe that can't be opened and a key that won't work. You must be moved to greater things and a little electrical knowhow will give a clue, albeit in a sort of ▶

◀ code! The answer should be very clear to us Brits.

The hoosegow should be open to you now, unless your thinking and mine are poles apart. Another item or two should be added to your collection, plus a good clue to give you a monopoly (?).

Walk on! Giddyup! Heigh Ho Silver! — in true cowboy style you can gallop across the plains — a short ride should put you in with the indians though — don't panic — you can drum up some support — if you know.

A dry wash? That seems a little odd but the merest flash of inspiration is all that's needed to help you jump ahead. So have a go!

A mine of information? — not really, but necessary to visit none the less and easy if you've picked up the clue.

At this point you might think of the odd substances you've found. I used to be a chemist, so it was pretty easy for me but it's a safe bet that if I can't help you, Guy Fawkes could!

Put plenty of distance between you and the result of your experiment though — or it'll be raining more than cats and dogs today!



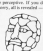
If you're clever you should be able to find somewhere safe to sleep without my help but don't go to bed too early. After all, you've earned a little relaxation by now, so go and enjoy yourself — the rewards might be more than spiritual.

That should be about all you need to get you by, except to say that the last place a cowboy wants to go is to Boot Hill, but, if you've done everything else, what have you got to lose?



Savage Island I

The fiendish *Savage Island I* is a quest, not for treasures but a password that will get you into the even more diabolical *Savage Island II* — hardly what I'd call a reward. The theme of this pair of adventures is highly original and slowly unfolds to the more perceptive. If you don't catch on, don't worry, all is revealed — at the end of Part II!



You begin in sand again — this time on a tropical island. You must rely on common sense and what you see. A lot of items are obtainable or useable — even if not obviously so.

Beach-combing can be a pleasant and profitable activity. If you don't own a spade or metal detector don't worry — the sand is nice and soft.

With a little effort you could round off your exploration by entering the extinct volcano and add an unwanted and extremely unhelpful item to your inventory. There's no way I've found to avoid it, you must rely on luck for now. On this first visit you might find somewhere safe to save a drink and a hot-spot that's going to be useful later on.

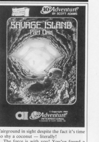
Crossing the lake and diving are quite easy — you've obviously learnt to swim since *Pirate Adventure* — but a little extra buoyancy is needed before you can hang on to anything you find. If this leaves you with nothing else to do — don't worry, wait it out.

Now things have really hit the fan! — stuck in the middle of hurricane Alexis with no option to save. There's always a chance you'll be blown away but a noise or two might lead you to something very heavy and useful but less dense than water.

The next part is so awkward I could almost tell you what to do and still leave you plenty of headaches but all I'll do is remind you that there's no wind in the cave but the present occupant seems to like you just a little too much. You must deal with him and collect what you can. A little water sport, a trip to the seaside will help — with a little luck you could see your problems evaporate.

The storm's blown out, movement is safe again but there's not long left before dark. There is no safe place to sleep on Savage Island so you'd best get ready to leave — quickly. Tarzan's swinging supports will aid your boat-building activities and, although it might be a little difficult to handle, you should soon have a seaworthy craft. Just make sure you build it in the right place.

Shades of *Pirate Adventure*! — time to pay a toll and find someone to give the rum to, this time for a reward and assistance. A new beach is the next stop, but there's no



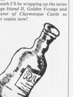
fairground in sight despite the fact it's time to shy a coconut — literally!

The force is with you! You've found a light, so now you can retrace your steps and search behind the dark opening — something smells a little fishy — or worse! but you might find a short-cut to make up for it.

Back in the tunnels you'll find two creatures, one of whom is slightly familiar and more than a little useful. Once this is sorted you're just about ready for your password — there is more than one and everything has a use, so make sure you are carrying everything you haven't used yet and it'll be as easy as abc.

That's it for this month — once again I hope I've left the easier tasks to you to leave plenty to do. This month's hints are a little broader than usual but you should be OK with a little thought and a dictionary (?). If you still have problems please write in or phone.

Next month I'll be wrapping up the series with *Savage Island II, Golden Voyage* and *The Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle* so order your copies now!



Next month's hint review will be the end of this series on Scott Adams' Classic Adventure. In March, Ken Matthews will begin a new series on the Infocom adventures, beginning with the *Zork* trilogy.



BECOME LONE WOLF...

...sole survivor of a devastating attack on the monastery of Kai.

A great cloud of black winged beasts has swept down and engulfed the monastery. All the Kai Lords, whose secret skills you were learning, have been killed.

Raising your face to the sky, you swear revenge on the Darklords of the West. But first, you must warn the King of the invasion, retrieve Sommerswerd and then use it to beat off the attackers. There are now two exciting LONE WOLF adventure games. Each one requires you to assume the mantle of Lone Wolf, make all his decisions for him, and actually fight his combats move by move. You really are Lone Wolf.

You are going on a journey, a quest. You create your own adventures, choose your own tactics and make your own decisions.

You swear

THE LESSONS OF COMBAT AND ENDURANCE

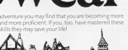
When you were training with the Kai Lords, you acquired many secret skills and disciplines. Now, you may need to use them. You may need to improve some, and disregard others.

"Combat Skills" may be needed to defeat the enemies you encounter on your way to reaching the beleaguered King, and whilst saving your country. You will need "Endurance" to survive. Each decision you make can alter the course of your adventure. So choose wisely, for you will often be surprised by the effect your choice may have on your survival.



THE SURVIVAL DISCIPLINES

Over the centuries, the Kai Lords had mastered the skills of the warrior. As you proceed through your adventure you may find that you are becoming more and more proficient. If you, too, have mastered these skills they may save your life!

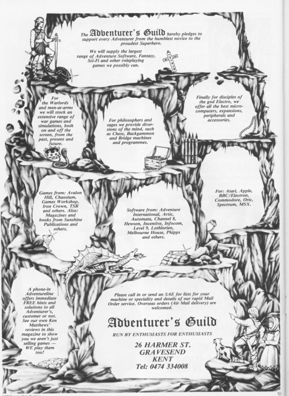


You can learn how to hide undetected amongst rocks and trees of the countryside. In a city, you can look and sound like a native which may help you to find shelter.

Learn how to communicate with animals and move objects by sheer concentration alone.

You can develop a "Sixth Sense" that warns you of imminent danger. It may also reveal the true nature of a stranger.

"Tracking" may help you choose the right path and decipher prints or tracks of creatures in the wild.



The Adventurer's Guild hereby pledges to support every Adventurer from the humblest novice to the proudest Superhero.
We will supply the largest range of Adventure Software, Fantasy, Sci-Fi and other roleplaying games we possibly can.
For the Warlords and men-at-arms we will stock an extensive range of war games and simulations, both on and off the screen, from the past, present and future.
For philosophers and sages we provide diversions of the mind, such as Chess, Backgammon and Bridge machines and programmes.
Finally for disciples of the god Electro, we offer all the best micro-computers, expansions, peripherals and accessories.
Games from: Avalon Hill, Chaosium, Games Workshop, Iron Crown, TSR and others. Also: Magazines and books from Sunshine Publications and others.
Software from: Adventure International, Artic, Automata, Channel 8, Hewson, Incentive, Infocom, Level 9, Lothlorien, Melbourne House, Phipps and others.
For: Atari, Apple, BBC/Electron, Commodore, Oric, Spectrum, MSX.
A phone-in Adventureline offers immediate FREE hints and solutions to all Adventurer's, customer or not. See our own Ken Matthews' reviews in this magazine to show you we aren't just selling games — WE play them too!
Please call in or send an SAE for lists for your machine or speciality and details of our rapid Mail Order service. Overseas orders (Air Mail delivery) are welcomed.
Adventurer's Guild
RUN BY ENTHUSIASTS FOR ENTHUSIASTS
26 HARMER ST.
GRAVESEND
KENT
Tel: 0474 334008

A new force in adventures?

Ken Matthews *reviews Games Workshop's Tower of Despair*

YOUR HANDS tremble with emotion as you remove the Staff, Flamebolt and the Silver Gauntlet from their place of honour in your Inner Sanctum. Despite their antiquity, not a mote of dust mars their magical surfaces and the High Runes inlaid in the Staff seem to shimmer with supernatural force.

It is many years since your late father, Thorvald, and his fellow warrior-mage Ellwood challenged and defeated the evil Malnor and his loathsome hell-spawn, banishing them to Limbo. Disaster has struck! Malnor has escaped and you, alone, must seek out the ageing Ellwood and recover the Gold Gauntlet which is in his safe-keeping. Only then will you, the sole hope of the Free Peoples, be strong enough to seek out Malnor in his lair and consign him to Eternity.

Cleansed in mind and body by ancient sorcerous rituals you cross the tapestried Hall of Castle Argent to the Chapel of the White Goddess, the deity of your family for untold generations. Prostrate on Her altar and completing the act of worship, a blinding light fills the chamber and a Holy Dagger, laced with fiery runes, appears before your startled gaze. This manifestation of power heartens you as it is clear that even the gods support your quest against the forces of Chaos. Your happiness is short-lived however, as you peer into your scrying sphere in search of a message from the Council of wizards. After a brief moment, the globe shows Malnor as his mind reaches out and becomes aware of you and your mission. The sphere is riven and a thousand glittering shards spray the Chapel as you avert your eyes.

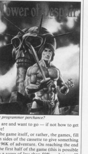
Now Malnor is alerted, time is short and, pausing only to sign to your mute servant that you are leaving, you grab your equipment, fling yourself into the saddle and thunder into the east to your Destiny . . .

Winner

Tower of Despair is a winner from the cover of the case on through, and gives weight to the Games Workshop slogan 'A New Force in Software'.

I'm obliged to say that — just in case the programmer resembles the hero on the game's cover! Seriously though, Games Workshop's first computer adventure is excellent and typical of what I'd expect from a world leader in fantasy games.

The development team of Russell Clarke, Mike McKeown, Steve Williams and Jamie Thompson are all contributors to the venerable *White Dwarf* magazine and, consequently, the support material with the game is of a very high standard. This takes the form of a superbly illustrated booklet (by Peter Martin) containing scenes from the adventure. These are very detailed and not entirely decorative as some important clues are contained in the drawings. Also included is Brian Cumming's map of Aelandor, which gives a good idea of where you are and want to go — if not how to get there!



The programmer perchance?

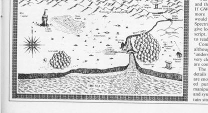
The game itself, or rather, the games, fill both sides of the cassette to give something like 96K of adventure. On reaching the end of the first half of the game (this is possible with a score of less than 50% — but you'll have missed some very useful information), the White Goddess gives you a password which won't work until you've SAVEd and then loaded this position into side two. Both loading and saving are very quick so save often to avoid retracing your steps — it's pretty easy to die in Aelandor.

The adventure was written with the *Quill* and this is freely admitted during loading. If GW had kept quiet about it (like some more well-known software houses), it would have been difficult to spot since the Spectrum character set has been altered to give location descriptions in a sort of italic script. This is pleasant and surprisingly easy to read.

Command input is, of course, verb/noun although three words are sometimes 'understood'. The commands appear in a very clear Gothic style script and responses are commendably quick.

The game is, naturally, all-text and the details of location descriptions and events are enough to satisfy even the most hardened purists. For general movement and manipulation, a wide range of commands and synonyms are understood although certain situations need the exact word. ▶

The map from the booklet which helps you plan your route to despair . . .





The Tower of Despair team — from left, Steve Williams, Jamie Thomson, Russell Clarke, Mike McKeown

◀ These are not so obscure as to detract from the game as a whole and the cryptic clues from characters, objects and, occasionally, the HELP command will often help avoid problems.

The game begins in earnest as you race across your land, pursued by some of Malnor's legions. The challenges are many and by no means simple. This should ensure lasting interest for any adventurer worth his — or her — salt.

Angel of Death

You will encounter line after line of defence as Malnor attempts to thwart your mission. Some, like the encounter with three unearthly doors, are relatively simple but others, like facing the Angel of Death himself, require much more thought and careful handling and completing the first half with a full 50% is no mean achievement.



Medusae

Medusae, Ogres and even little Wood Sprites appear to challenge your every step throughout part two and, if you miss valuable items or information, there are few opportunities to retrace your steps, so tread carefully and SAVE often.

You will follow the blood-stained path of Malnor's minions through to the shattered remains of Ellwood's home. There he coughs out his life blood as an ogre calmly plunders the treasures Ellwood gained from a lifetime of honour and bravery. Rage overwhelms you but the slaughter of the ogre affords little as you discover that Malnor's foulest servant, the dreaded Hellgaunt, has beset the old man and wrested the Gold Gauntlet from his care. Even now the creature speeds to his vile master with the artifact that would leave you helpless and give him total dominion over Earth.

The race is on as you pursue the Hellgaunt to a dramatic confrontation on the frail rope bridge high above the River Coldfloe.

If you succeed the end is in sight, but by no means easy to reach. Almost every move forbids returning — you are rightly told there's no time for that — and offers another challenge to provide hours more careful thought before Malnor is thrown down and your Destiny complete.

There is little left to say, except to commend Games Workshop for a highly enjoyable first adventure that lives up to all the claims made for it. Commodore owners won't miss out either, since GW are now working, with a modified version of the Quill, on a version for your machine. Better watch out!

Finally, I would like to mention that Games Workshop's software co-ordinator, Angus Ryall, is inviting adventure writers to submit their work for evaluation. The address is Games Workshop, 27/29 Sunbeam Rd., London NW10 6JP.

Any of you talented enough to succeed should be proud to see your adventure given the Games Workshop treatment. □

Adventure	:	*Tower of Despair*
Micro	:	*Spectrum 48K*
Price	:	*£7.95*
Format	:	*Cassette*
Supplier	:	*Games Workshop, 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP*



Eureka!

Tony Bridge weighs up Eureka, Domark's five part adventure with a £25,000 prize to be won

"EUREKA" — "I'VE FOUND IT!"

And, according to Domark, the authors and publishers of *Eureka*, this is what at least 30,000 Spectrum and Commodore owners will wish to be saying soon: this is the number of people who have already ordered and bought this program — which number, they hope, will eventually swell to 100,000 or more.



Ian Livingstone — Eureka author

The program is the latest in the long line of "games with prizes" that have been launched in the last few months, and there is a massive £25,000 awaiting the first lucky person to complete the adventure. The deadline is the end of 1985, after which the money will be shared equally among all the registered purchasers of the program — now let's see, £25,000 divided by 100,000 . . . I don't think anyone can retire on *that*!

But, it's all very well to offer fantastic prizes; that's all been done before, and the programs which are being pushed are not always, unfortunately, of the highest standard — how does *Eureka*, then, stand up to scrutiny? Is it merely an average adventure, knocked up quickly to take advantage of the hyperbole of the cash prize, or is it something more substantial?

The box is certainly substantial, being a large book-sized affair, containing the cassette of the program and a 20-page illustrated manual. This manual contains, apart from the rather muddled instructions for use, several well-painted pictures, each of which corresponds to one of the scenarios in the program. The tape consists of five main programs, and each of these is an adventure. They take place in Prehistoric times, Roman times, Arthurian Britain, Colditz Castle (The Second World War) and The Modern Caribbean. They are designed to be played in conjunction with the illustrations and the accompanying lines of verse, which are *supposed* to give the player a clue (or two) to help him on his way to discovering that secret phone number. If he is the first to ring the number, Domark will shower him with lots of m-o-n-e-y (accompanied, no doubt, by the song of a thousand flash bulbs).

The storyboard was written by that well-known author of two million (at least) Fighting/Fantasy game books, Ian Livingstone, who ought to know what he is doing by now. The programming of the adventures was managed by a team of Hungarian whizz-kids who, it is said, had never written an adventure before. Four graphic artists, two musicians and a professor of logic are among those who took part in the project, and the result is some 300K of program.

Now to those programs, and the first surprise is that each of the five adventures comprises two sub-programs — a simple arcade game leading to the adventure itself. And when I say simple, I mean *Simple*! This aspect of the program was a major disappointment for me. Having seen many examples of the Hungarian taste for quirky, humorous and playable arcade games (and taking notice of the somewhat high price of the package) I was, I'm afraid, expecting something rather more than the extremely pedestrian effort that met me after loading the first program. This takes about six long minutes to load — and there is no way around it, you *have* to play. If you score over 25,000 points in the preceding game, every 500 extra points gives you an extra Vigour point in the adventure to follow. This could be quite a good idea, as a higher Vigour rating will give the player a better chance to win at combat.

The way the arcade is presented makes the whole thing extremely tedious, however — certainly a good player *could* rack up many extra points in this way, but the only reaction you will probably use is to say, "So What?" The games are as exciting as last night's dog end, with character sized block graphics ambling about the screen, doing Heaven knows what to Heaven knows whom . . . the object of each game is not properly explained, and the controls, if the keyboard is used, are arranged in the weirdest manner! I mean, the 6 key for Left, the 7 key for Right? Well, maybe Hungarian Spectrums have a different keyboard.

Dominic Wheatley — half of Domark



After this inauspicious start, I then had to wait for another five or six tedious minutes for the adventure to load (you can experience this mind-numbing pleasure with each adventure).

Trying very hard to be charitable, I prepared myself for "an epic brain-teaser . . . far in advance of the 'shoot-em-games' currently standard in the market", to quote just one example of the Domark hyperbole. Another example is: "the latest in software sophistication, colour,



The Swordmaster Stirs ....

graphics and sound.'' Was I to be disappointed again? 'Fraid so!

The graphics occupy the top third of the screen, while the bottom two thirds are reserved for the text messages and input — pretty standard stuff, and not particularly sophisticated yet. Wait a minute, maybe there is some absolutely fantastic graphic implementation? No: the graphics consist of an admittedly pretty little scene of the current location. This usually looks like an Impressionist painting, and you have to screw up your eyes to see things clearly. This unfolds across the screen, rather as if a curtain is being drawn back to reveal the scene in the Spectrum version, while the Commodore version has a myriad little coloured squares flipping over, rather like those displays so beloved of Chinese gymnasts. Sometimes, only a little of the screen is displayed, with some monster or other adversary appearing to one side at a later stage. For example, coming upon the Gate to Rome calls up the picture of The Gate — trying to proceed through then brings forth a picture of The Guard, who will stop you. At other times, little moving pictures of a flapping Pterodactyl or Eagle, or crashing waves, will be shown. There is, however, no option to turn these off.



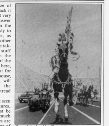
Mark Strachan — Domark's other half

And what about the promised sound? Surely a Mazurka or two from those two musicians? Sorry, only a few beeps which even I could coax forth with a couple of RND statements.

Then maybe the text is out of the ordinary? W-e-l-l . . . this is going to sound churlish, but no, again. The descriptions of the locations are the quite standard ''You are in a Swamp''. The puzzles, of course, are hard, as befits an eventual prize of £25,000 (or 2p if someone doesn't crack it by the end of 1985) — as I haven't got very far in the adventures, I can't really answer for later tasks, but the first one in the Prehistoric scenario is pretty obviously to find some way to make gunpowder, as there is coal (carbon), saltpetre and other necessary requisites lying about for the taking. There is also a hollow Rib, so stuff your freshly-made gunpowder down the Rib, light it . . . and Bang goes one of the monsters. Monsters? Oh, yes, they are here alright. The T. Rex, of course, is out for your blood (though maybe the little mouse, in the true tradition of adventures, will frighten *that* one away), while the vegetarian Brachiosaurus will merely tread on you in an absentminded moment!

Unfortunately, the authors have not seen fit to put a Save routine in the adventures, so, once dead, the whole thing must be played through again. This isn't too much trouble, fortunately, as the adventures are so ''sophisticated'' that there are none of the boring features of other adventures, like independent characters to clutter up the proceedings. No, in *Eureka*, the objects will always be found in the same place, so map-making will pay dividends in reincarnations. In fact, map-making is quite easy. I haven't yet found any mazes and most locations seem to follow quite logically from the previous one. It's also a good idea to try every direction — while swimming in a lake, for instance, try going DOWN. A nice juicy treasure awaits (actually, it's part of the menu for a home-made bomb).

Each mini-adventure possesses a different character, or style. *Prehistoric*, for example, puts a premium on speed — hesitate for too long, and you'll be stepped on, gnashed up or plucked up into the air (though you can get round this by typing in one letter and then going away for a couple of days to think about things). The next program, *Roman*, makes a virtue of WAITing around, even though the player must *CAVE* when he enters the 'Street of Horses'. You'd better brush up on your Latin and Roman history, though! Similarly, one adventure will respond readily to 'EXAMINE', while another will just reply 'YOU CAN'T'. All this is very disorientating, as a different style of play has to be learnt anew with each adventure.



One of the booklet illustrations

What reason, then, is there to play *Eureka*? Well, there is, of course that £25,000. This is a staggering sum and makes prizes like Incentive's £400 Video Recorder look like very small beer. Incentive's three programs would add up to something like £16 — but these adventures are more like the real thing. They're atmospheric, tough, and addictive, unlike the Domark effort. The puzzle book idea is not new and has been done with far more style in one case, and far *less* style in another — so it's up to you. If you enjoy deciphering obscure pictorial clues and want to be able to light your cigarette with a fiver, then *Eureka* is for you, and should provide plenty of puzzles for your brain to work on. But a warning — take the adverts with a pinch of salt and don't expect ''the latest in software sophistication''. □

Program	:	*Eureka!*
Micros	:	*Spectrum 48K, CBM 64*
Price	:	*£14.95*
Format	:	*Cassette*
Supplier	:	*Domark*

Zendos

Adventure *The Rules of Zendos* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£7.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Dorcas Software, 3 The Oasis, Glenfield, Leics LE3 8QS.*

THE RUNES OF ZENDOS is an interesting and intriguing new game that comes more in the arcventure category.

Using the Spell of Darkness, the evil wizard Zendos has cast the country of Dorcasia into eternal night until all pledge allegiance to him. The 'spirits' of the twelve months have each been trapped by Zendos within the Tempus Runes or Runic Hour Glasses and placed within his labyrinthine castle.

Once the game has loaded you can effectively choose twelve different starting points as each 'month' has been hidden within a different group of rooms. You can change adventures at any time simply by typing in the number of the one you wish to move to.

Each screen is a high-res picture of a room, complete with animated characters representing you and, in most cases, a monster. There are large numbers of creatures and objects in each game and, although they are the same from game to game, they are 'shuffled round' so that a monster you'll meet at the end of adventure 10 might turn up near the start of adventure two.

The game has combat but this is not in real time so you have a chance to think what to do, say and so on. Simple but full sentences are understood and some abbreviations are allowed. A full dictionary of verbs or prepositions is given which is very useful. Saves are allowed on tape or microdrive.

Fighting is animated in a most amusing way, showing you and your opponent taking little 'digs' at one another until only one remains. Your respective strengths are shown and the first reduced to zero is dead.

Some items you find in the castle aid your attacks or help you get rid of the monsters without violence. Some cunning traps are also included, like exploding clocks and hypnotising mirrors. Lost strength can be regained by eating your provisions or some of the items found in the castle.

Now and again an object will add to your luck or reveal a mysterious spell or cryptic clue to aid you later on. Some objects carry mystic runes which must eventually be translated if you are to succeed in 'freeing' the months.

As a start I'd advise you to get as far as you can in each of the twelve adventures to build up a list of the creatures, objects, and spells to be found. Even being killed isn't all bad — you often get a clue as to how to deal with the monster after you're dead!

Overall, I found the game good fun and quite addictive. I'm sure there are many, many hours of play before you find the final solution. **SG**



SOFTWARE INVENTORY

What's on the way in the adventure world — if you have a new adventure, war game or real-life simulation which you are about to release send a copy and accompanying details to Software Inventory, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2H 7PP

Tee shot!

Simulation *The Open* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£5.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Cases Computer Simulations, 14 Langton Way, Blackheath, London SE3 7TL*



THERE HAVE been many golf simulations for computers over the last three or four years, and none have given even a hint of the excitement of a 30-foot putt, or a 300-yard drive. How can a computer, after all, mimic the smell of freshly-mown grass, the click of the ball against the club-head, or the call of the birds in the trees, laughing at your last shot into the undergrowth? One day, I'm sure, some genius of the keyboard will take time off from writing the latest million-selling *Zap-Climb* game and turn his talents to creating a realistic golf simulation, complete with trees waving in the wind, the white ball arcing across the blue sky and a 3D view of the fairway and green.

Until then, we'll have to make do with programs like this one from CCS. All the usual play methods are used here. First, the type of play must be decided — do you want to play a championship, a single round (with one to four players) or a practice round (in which the holes may be played in any order)? Then the club (1-10) must be selected, and the strength and direction of your shot. Several things, as in real life, will affect your choice. Wind speed (constant or variable) and whether or not you are in rough or a hazard, will all play a part.

After the selection, and you have the opportunity of changing the parameters if you wish, comes one of the program's special touches. To one side of the screen is a little graphic of you, the player. Now the ball has to be hit with the club you've selected — by pressing SPACE, you set the club in motion. Watch it go back, and then swing down to the ball — pressing SPACE again stops the club, the "shape" of the resulting shot depending on your reactions. This is a very neat way of building in a chance factor, and makes an addictive feature — once you "get into the swing", you'll find your shots going almost where you want them.

When you finally arrive at the green, a close-up of the hole, the green and the immediately surrounding area is shown, and another little picture, not of your "man" this time, but of your putter resting against the ball. The same sort of reaction-testing action is necessary to get your ball moving, but this time you must take into account the direction and degree of the slope, which information is also shown.

So far, *The Open* has proved to be a pretty good simulation, and much more playable than others, although each hole takes almost as long to play as on a real golf course! The other feature of the program which is unusual is that each side of the cassette contains a different course from the Open rota. Side one has Carnoustie, the longest Open course and a real test of accurate golf, and side two has Turnberry, with its spectacular seaside holes. It's a pity that each course has to be loaded in along with the game — if data alone could be loaded as required, we could look forward to playing some other courses. Although the block graphics used by author Watson (any relation?) cannot hope to evoke a realistic atmosphere, nevertheless, the program allows the novice golfer to gain some insight into the complexities and frustrations of these magnificent courses. *The Open* is the first golf simulation I've seen that is actually interesting and fun to play. **TB**

Fey adventure

Adventure *Faerie* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£1.75* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *8th Day Software, 18 Flaxhill, Moreton, Wirral, L46 7UH.*

AT LAST we have a real adventure at a bargain price. *Faerie* is a surrealistic fantasy written with *The Quill*. You are hiking along a country lane one fine midsummer's day when you see a wand lying in a field. When you wave it the familiar landscape is transformed into one which harbours sufficient magic and wonder to rival Alice's own adventures in wonderland. It's inhabited by a host of creatures ranging from faeries to ogres, animated chessmen and even a talking fish.

The object of the game is to collect some 30 treasures and score as many points as you can. This entails solving quite complex problems, and to solve one problem you have to solve a number of lesser ones first. To cross the bridge you need to read a sign which is on the other side; to read the sign you need a water glass; to get the water glass you need to cross the bridge, or almost, but if I was any more specific I would be telling.

Other clues are also hidden in the game. Eating a dead fish, for example, produces a riddle of a sort more usually associated with that tv quiz show *3-2-1*: 'magic in cave will help score while a books' advice will help you more.' At least this is more forthcoming than typing Help, which merely replies with 'You must be joking.' Should you be really desperate 8th Day will send you fairly comprehensive hints sheets on receipt of a sae.

Although problem-orientated and with no specific plot, the situations you encounter are sufficiently varied to sustain your interest. The atmosphere is also evocatively conveyed: 'The smell of freshly mown hay is heavy in the air, as if after a heavy shower. A bee flies by . . .' It's quite idyllic really, roaming through these enchanted forests with lights dancing among the trees; at least, until the sandman comes and wraps you in his cloak. But fortunately, you are given opportunities to escape, even if you are restricted to a limited number of moves.

There are several modes of transport in this land: magic wand (one way only), spells and teleportation (which requires the correct two-word input before you can be whisked away to the giant mushroom and other exotic locations).

This must be the first adventure to disprove the old saying 'you get what you pay for'. On side Two is a description of the scenario, with general advice for playing adventures, so you're actually getting very much more. **JF**

Viva la revolution

Wargame *Insurgency* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£5.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Cases Computer Simulations, 14 Langton Way, Blackheath, London SE3 7TL*

INSURGENCY claims to "simulate modern warfare in most of the worlds trouble spots". One player is the government forces and the other the guerillas.

Theoretically this could be a very interesting game, but in practice it is an extremely boring and frustrating waste of an hour or two.

Maps

The programme offers 100 different maps chosen by selecting a number between 1-100. All of them are extremely basic, simply being a series of villages, linked by roads, with the odd mountain range or two. The map colour is predominatly green, depicting jungle.

Choices of troops and budget allocation are offered to the players in turn, necessitating the other player turning away from the screen.



The government forces are: infantry used for occupying villages and trotting about in the jungle, armour which is restricted to riding up and down the road net but better at fighting than the infantry, artillery for shelling (but which is extremely vulnerable to attack), helicopters, to support ground troops and searching for the pesky rebels, and finally aircraft, to carry our recon and bomb the guerilla forces.

The cover instructions tell you that you also receive other units, but I never got any! The government may choose within certain limitations 20 combat units.

In addition there are: engineers, supply trucks, which oddly can go through the jungle while the armour units cannot, intelligence for victimising locals and spying, medics, and lastly your headquarters command post.

The guerillas have a much more limited choice of troop type. Guerillas for fighting and recruiting, the same with radios, moving faster and more communicative, anti-aircraft units, and supply planes for resupply.

They are also given options for spies, and a command post. The supply planes are able to drop arms or food — you must choose a mixture of these up to 100 plane loads. The guerillas have 12 active service units only.

The command key words are simple enough, each unit having a series of options per turn.

On the surface of it the commands should cover the things that you would like to do, but this is not so. Either I totally misunderstood the spartan instructions or the game has definitely missed the crucial point of the whole idea.

Conflict is the name of the game, and conflict is exactly what's missing. When we moved two opposing units into the same village nothing happened, when we wanted to attack a guerilla unit with helicopters or aircraft, the programme merely flashed up the word CONTACT.

Without the option to fight, what does one do? Unless someone tells you, forget *Insurgency*. CCS can do better — and they have. **KB**

Pharoah game

Adventure *Tomb of Akhenaten* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£2.99* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Cases Computer Simulations, 14 Langton Way, Blackheath, London SE3 7TL.*

THIS GAME is one of CCS's budget range, and this review is going to be a budget review, too.

Other software houses have shown us that inexpensive, pocket-money games can be as good as many full-price titles, so it is a pity that CCS have seen fit to release this poor excuse.

If you really want to know what you are missing, let me relate what appears on the cassette art-work: "Discover the lost treasure of the Pharaoh Akhenaten. Somewhere in the labyrinth of tunnels within the pyramid is the lost tomb. Your strength is limited but can be increased if you find food along the way. Beware of spiders, poisonous asps and the Spirit of the Labyrinth!" Like reading estate agents' adverts or holiday brochures, a little practice at reading these blurbs will prove to be beneficial to your pocket — in this case, of course, the game is obviously a maze. And so it proves to be.



At the start, a complete plan of the maze is shown on-screen, with your little stick-man in one corner. Also shown is your strength, which decreases by one unit with each step, and a tally of the amount of treasure you have picked up. Moving around the maze, to the accompanying silly sound ▶

◀ effects, your little man can move over skulls (which may or may not be good news), deadly snakes (definitely *not* good news), or food squares (which bump up your strength). Eventually, you will find a key (great fanfares!), which is supposed to glow as you get close to "the secret exit" — I assume that this will lead you to the next maze (I think there are four altogether).

And that's it. There were better games on the ZX81 three or four years ago, and nowadays even magazine listings are more exciting, as well as cheaper. **TB**

Commodore Sherlock

Adventure *Sherlock* **Micro** *Commodore 64* **Price** *£14.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Melbourne House, Church Yard, Tring, Herts, HP23 5LU.*

The Spectrum version of *Sherlock* has been around for a little while now and I expect this version to follow it into the charts. The Commodore version faithfully reproduces all the features of the prototype, except that the graphics use different colours (naturally).

For those who do not know, *Sherlock* follows closely the successful model adopted in *The Hobbit* with static graphic displays of some scenes accompanied by reams of text output and pretty clever text input. The parser (the bit which 'understands' English) is still quite limited but it is streets ahead of most other text adventures. Advances in *Sherlock* Inglish over *The Hobbit* mainly seem to be in conversation. Watson is not as prone as previous characters to inappropriate actions (but is still pretty thick) and you do not have to preface every piece of conversation with "SAY TO".

The main difference between this game and its predecessor is its flavour. Some effort has been made to create a period piece and the feel is reasonably authentic. For example, most of Holmes' movements are carried out by cab or train. Having to remember to enter and leave vehicles gets a little irritating after a while as you feel characters should perform such actions without needing to be told, but the stilted structure of this kind of adventure comes very close to the one-dimensional writing of Conan-Doyle and it is easy to believe in the role being played. There are not many adventures of which that can be said.

Melbourne reckon that it will take several months to complete and I'm in no position to contradict them as it takes me all my time to catch the right train. The crime sounds very intriguing, but I haven't even found my first real clue yet. Or have I? **NW**

Ultimate Underwurlde

Adventure *Underwurlde* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£9.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Ultimate Play the Game, The Green, Ashby de la Zouche, Leicestershire, LE9 5JU.*

THE CLASSIC dungeon adventure meets the shoot-em-up arcade game, in Ultimate's *Underwurlde*.

It's certainly fast! It will keep the most ardent arcade addict glued to their joysticks for many happy hours, and its graphics are among the best I've seen on the Spectrum for a long time.

The adventurer starts on the lowest and most noisome level of a vast underground maze of caves and dungeons. From that lowly beginning you have to fight your way up through level after level of dangerous territory, until you reach your goal, the topmost towers of the Castle of Darkness, far, far, above you. (The smart adventurer would map this one).

To stay alive you need to be a cross between Tarzan of the Apes and the Bionic man, as you swing, climb, jump, and trampoline your way from level to level. You can catch a lift on a beautifully animated and very wobbly bubble, or at least you can try! Or swing like a spider on its dragline, or scramble over the many pieces of furniture that litter the dungeons. They range from what looks like a Chippendale table to cuckoo clocks, and even potted palms, all beautifully drawn. But whatever you do, you're in constant danger from the many monsters that roam the mazes. Every level has a different set of monsters and you have to find a whole new set of weapons to kill them off.

You can check how much maze you've completed, at any time, on a percentage basis. Or stop/pause the game while you get your breath back — and you'll need to get your breath back.

It's a superfast multi-screen action adventure with very few drawbacks, and a great deal to recommend it. The drawbacks unfortunately include very poor sound effects; the monsters sound more like frightened mice than horrible nasties. The colours are a bit dingy, and it's so fast that there are times when a beginner's level at a slower speed would be a very welcome addition. Not all of us have bionic joystick fingers!

There is a small bug you can use to your adventuring advantage. Certain monsters, when they get close enough to kill you, just send you spinning off to the next level. Useful if you're feeling lazy! But you have to find the right monster, the wrong one will most certainly chew you up and spit out the pieces with the greatest gusto!

Underwurlde definitely gets my vote for fast action, entertainment, and superb graphics. I look forward to seeing Ultimate's next adventure. If it's up to this sort of standard, it should be well worth playing. **SW**

Arabian nights

Adventure *ZimSalaBim* **Micro** *Commodore 64* **Price** *£9.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Melbourne House, Church Yard, Tring, Herts, HP23 5LU.*

Arabian adventures are not too common and graphic Arabian adventures for the Commodore 64 with joystick movement and text commands are even rarer. A good game of this kind is rarer still, but *ZimSalaBim* is just such a beast.

The action takes place in and around the Sultan's palace and you have to break into the Sultan's bedroom and steal some gold which belongs to your village.

Getting into the palace is not too hard but the trouble is you tend to end up in the palace jail from which exit is harder. There are also deserts and caves to explore, each basic location consisting of a graphic screen which can be scrolled to the left or the right. At certain points you can also go 'back' or 'forward' into another such screen. The graphics are pretty good, with our hero even blinking whilst he waits for an instruction, though the invisible glass wall that marks the edge of each location rather spoils the illusion. Scrolling is smooth and objects as well as locations and other characters are well portrayed though sometimes if you stand on top of a graphic and drop or get something odd results occur. The only character with free movement is our hero.

The game itself is not too hard and should be a favourite with novices, especially if you are looking for a compromise between the traditional text adventure and the new breed of 'Jet Set' clones. My main quibble is with the manual which contains at least four inaccuracies on one page, which could be quite off-putting to the adventure acolyte.

Not brilliant, but certainly a worthy offering from Melbourne. **NW**

Nomad

Adventure *The Nomad of Time* **Micro** *Commodore 64* **Price** *£9.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Mosaic Publishing Ltd, 187 Upper Street, London N1 1RQ.*

BASED on the Michael Moorcock trilogy of the same name (of which the most well known volume is *The War Lord of the Air)* this is a slightly unusual but also slightly tedious adventure conducted mainly from the cockpit of an airship. The cockpit display is neat but nothing like the Jumbo and helicopter simulations which make enjoyable games out of complexity. If anything control in this airship is too simple, so that it becomes boring after a while, especially because the keyboard scanning routine seems rather uneven so commands are often missed. As this means that you can miss your chance of landing it can become very frustrating very quickly.

Once you manage to land, in one of ten 'time zones' scattered around the world (brush up on your longitude and latitude, folks) you must find ▶

◀ the three jewels of time in 60 days, with just the cryptic message "Eyes to the cold" to aid you. On the ground you are in a standard two word text adventure with slow processing, one of the most frustrating Help commands I've ever encountered and some pretty graphics which do not seem to change for any given location.

Somewhere beneath all the frustration there is probably an interesting adventure trying to get out but you need to be patient and motivated to get very far in this game because of its many foibles (for example to get someone to talk you apparently have to say 'SPEAK MAN', people are called objects, there is no cursor to guide your typing, and there are interminable pauses during text processing . . .).

Judging by its professional appearance it will repay perseverance but there are too many problems with play to make it worth its price. **NW**

Micro Go

Strategy Simulation *Microgo 1* **Micro** *BBC B, Electron* **Price** *£9.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Edge Computers Ltd, PO Box 75, Reading RG1 5JS*

FIRSTLY, a brief description of the game *Go*. Two players, black and white, place counters (stones) on a board, attempting to encircle enemy stones. Captured stones count toward the player's score. The game ends when neither player can move, or does not wish to move, or a resignation is made.

This program will support human vs. human games, computer vs. itself, and of course,



human vs. computer. The main complaint is the small size of the playing board. *Go* is supposed to be played on a nineteen by nineteen board, but the program uses a nine by nine board. Ever tried playing chess on a four by four board?

Microgo has 10 skill levels, allowing either side to have up to five stones start. You position your stone on the board with the cursor keys, and press return when it is in position. The computer warns the player if a stone is in imminent danger of being captured, if it only needs one more stone to completely ensnare it. The program offers a 'beginners mode', indicating potential captives, and territory that could be captured. The committing of 'suicide', that is, the placing of a stone in a position where it could be immediately captured, is not allowed. Neither the player nor the computer can repeat a move in any one game.

As for how good an opponent the computer is . . . well, I forced the computer to resign once, and also snatched a couple of wins. However, I lose count of the number of times I lost resoundingly. The program only analyses the possibilities for the subsequent move, but this will be quite enough to beat most players. If you find that you win too easily, you could always give the computer a head start! The response time of the computer is, on average, three seconds on the Beeb, and five seconds on the Elk.

The basics of the game are easy to learn, and the program is very easy to use. A full demonstration game is included, with notes in the program to explain what is going on. The display is clear, colourful, and pleasing to the eye.

Microgo 1 is quite enjoyable, but suffers from the size of the board. Perhaps a *Microgo 2* will cure this? **AT**

Des res

Simulation *Country Cottages* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£5.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Sterling Software, PO Box 839, 86-88 Edgware Road, London W2 2YW*

IF YOU HAVE an ambition to be a rich property owner, *Country Cottages* could suit you. It's the ideal way of making (or losing) a fortune on property, without actually spending a penny. Vicarious living at its boldest!



The basic idea is that you are an investor who wants to buy country cottages. To buy your cottages you have to negotiate a loan from your friendly bank manager at a high fixed rate of interest. (Your bank manager won't be so friendly if you lose his money!)

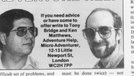
Once you're solvent and the interest is ticking up, you visit the estate agent, who takes you to view the properties available. The agent's prospectus includes good and bad points of the properties for sale. For instance, your cottage might have no roof, but terrific burglar alarms.

Graphically, what should be a pretty cottage looks more like a shed in a barren field. Still, once you've spent your money and if expenses and repairs haven't made you bankrupt, you can then advertise your delightful cottages in superb rural settings and, hopefully, find some sucker who will buy or rent them. Then with your new found wealth you can buy more sheds . . . sorry — cottages.

You can buy up to four properties, though you can choose your level of hazard and start with only two (a sensible move in these depressed times).

The game needs at least two players, and I would recommend it more for classroom use than for home use. Properly handled in a classroom setting it could prove interesting and informative, giving a reasonable idea of the costs and problems involved in buying property. But certainly it would need adult help and supervision for children to get the best out of this one. **SW**

ADVENTURE HELP



WELL, what a year 1984 was! Lots of superb new adventures, each one seeming to be even better than the one before.

As adventures are progressing all the time, so is our magazine, and we aim, with your help, to get even better during the next year. Adventuring, although usually a solo pursuit, is almost always better when two or more people play, each contributing in his or her own way. And it's the same with Adventure Contact — many people write in to us with adventure problems (maybe you have), and there must be just as many with the answers to those problems. So, skim through the Contact section and see if you can help someone through a sticky patch.

So to the first problems of 1985. One of the growing industries is just what we are offering here — namely, Adventure Hints 'n' Tips, and one of the experts (writing in another magazine which I always read from cover to cover!) is Derek Brewster. Not only does he produce a monthly column, but he is also one of our most successful software authors. His latest program, rocketing up the charts, is *Kentilla*, a Fantasy in which Velnor the Evil Sorcerer of *Velnor's Lair* reappears. The adventure seems to offer quite a difficult set of problems, and many people have written asking: "How do I stop the Boat from sinking?" (among other questions, of course!) — well, you must BAIL WATER using the Chalice from the Sack.

Eureka is another success at the moment — with £25,000 at stake, it's no wonder. At least 100,000 people have placed orders for the game, and presumably are now all locked in mortal combat to be the first to get their hands on all that lovely money. I wouldn't like to give anyone an unfair advantage, but there are a couple of problems in the very first episode, the solutions to which might just help one or two people get a little further on. The Brachiosaurus will step on you if you make the slightest move, so just STAY STILL (and this must be done twice) — not quite as stylish as the WAIT command to which we have become accustomed, but it will do the trick.

Another monster, the Tyrannosaurus Rex, is just after your blood, and will follow your every move. There is no direct way to deal with this slavering beast — the best thing to do is to attempt to lure the thing to the pit. If you can JUMP the Pit, then you will find that the T Rex will fall in.

Speaking of *Velnor's Lair*, the crocodiles are a bit of a nuisance to many people. After knocking off all those monsters, it would only be fair to share some with the Crocs, now wouldn't it? To cross the river, USE BATH.

Back now to rather less ancient adventures. *Golden Baton*, from Channel 1, is still a pretty good slog. Along the way, you'll find a Staff with Runic symbols carved into the wood. To read these, and get a nifty clue, WEAR HELMET (this will be found in the Stable in the Castle). In *Circus*, to get started, GET SHOVEL, then DIG FIELD. Here you will find something to help you later. In the Underwater exhibit of *Waxworks*, SAY 46, then GO EAST.

Mrs Mairi Marshall has written to me recently, asking for help in *Atlantis* (M&J Software) — she's stuck in the Tomb — and *Mountains of Ket*, as she can't get past the Skull. This is very near the end, Mairi, and you must, as the clue says "be a wizard". Try wearing all the wizard-like things that you should have collected in your travels.

Mairi offers help in Level 9's *Dungeon Adventure* and *Lords of Time*, as well as Artic's *Adventure D* and *Golden Apple* and Channel 8's *Perseus and Andromeda*. Some hints she passes along for this one are: to fly using the winged sandals, MOUNT PEDESTAL and WAIT — to foil the evil Harpies, CLIMB TEMPLE and SPREAD NET. To ride Pegasus, FIT HALTER. You can contact Mairi (with SSAE as usual) at, 1, Shallmarsh Close, Higher Bebington,

ADVENTURE CONTACT

HAVE YOU BEEN staring at the screen for days, or given up in disgust, stuck in an adventure whose problems seem insurmountable? Adventure Contact may be the answer. This column is designed to put adventurers in touch with one another. When you're stumped a fellow adventurer may be able to help — and you may be able to solve other people's problems. If you are having difficulties with an adventure, fill in this coupon and send it to Adventure Contact, Micro Adventurer, 12/13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD. We will publish Adventure Contact entries each month in this special column.

Micro ....

Adventure ....

Problem ....

....

....

Name ....

Address ....

....

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** The Hulk **Problem** How do I avoid being crushed by high gravity, what use are the fan and the mirror **Name** Donal Jamieson **Address** Miltown Malbay, Co Clare, Eire

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** Ten Little Indians **Problem** Where is figurine number 10 (black)? I have the others. **Name** N Klein Schiphorst-Bouman **Address** Pomperschans 19, 5095 AS Leende, Netherlands

MICRO Dragon 32 **Adventure** Return of the Ring **Problem** How do I get the key off the genie and the amulet off the Trog? **Name** Ceri Jones **Address** East Park House, Cagefoot Lane, Henfield, West Sussex

MICRO CBM64 **Adventure** Ring of Power **Problem** How do I repair the hole in the boat? **Name** Thomas Øhrbom **Address** Kongeskogveien 10, 3290 Stavern, Norway

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** Ship of Doom **Problem** How to get the key, how to get the woman out of the ice, what's the sonic screwdriver for? **Name** Anthony Jones **Address** 129 Parc Road, Cwmparc, Rhondda, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales

MICRO Electron **Adventure** Twin Kingdom Valley **Problem** What do I do when I have all 1024 points? **Name** Jon Willington **Address** The Old Schoolhouse, Yazor, Hereford

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** Ten Little Indians **Problem** Where is the violet figurine? I can give help on the other nine! **Name** Phil Jenner **Address** 11 Stobart Close, Beccles, Suffolk

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** Twin Kingdom Valley **Problem** How do I get the master key off the dragon in the north tower? **Name** Mark Flyn **Address** 144 Horton Road, Datchet, Slough, Berkshire



a diamond can also claim his or her share of the Royalty Fund.

This grows with every copy sold up to a maximum of £1 million.

The Spirit of the Stones book is a great read.

The Spirit of the Stones software is great entertainment.

But they're much more than that.

They're an adventure.

A fascinating tale of mystery and imagination.

A voyage of discovery on the Isle of Wight.

A voyage of discovery

STONES HIDDEN ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

There are 41 of them.

41 real diamonds hidden somewhere on the island, just waiting to be discovered.

40 diamonds set in stoneware talismans. And the great Wight Eye itself, the most fabulous diamond of them all.

Only one man knows where they are hidden, and he's not saying.

All that he has to say he's said already. In the Spirit of the Stones.

It's a book and a computer game.

And together they reveal the whereabouts of all those diamonds.

But – and here's the catch...in the form of riddles and clues.

Solve the puzzles in the program and you'll find it easier to solve the puzzles in the book.

Solve the puzzles in the book and one (or more) diamonds can be yours.

Forever. And ever.

You don't even have to go to the Isle of Wight. (Though should you want to, we've put a bargain holiday offer in every pack).

You simply work out where the diamonds are, and post off your claim.

Whoever discovers

into an unknown world of poltergeists, unholy spirits, banshees, manticores and demons.

The Spirit of the Stones is as entertaining as it can be rewarding. And, like all of our software, it has been specifically designed to get the best out of Commodore hardware.

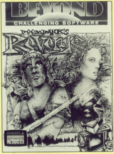
You can't choose better.

Commodore software: it costs no more, even though there's more to it.

commodore
COMPUTER SOFTWARE



SPIRIT OF THE STONES DISK OR CASSETTE WITH BOOK £14.99.



Doomdark's Revenge

Spectrum 48K

25 copies of the sequel to the Lords of Midnight to be won — now you can join the quest to rescue Morkin

Just answer these six questions on famous quests and post off the coupon to: Doomdark's Revenge competition, Micro Adventurer, 12/13 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7PP

1 What were King Arthur's Knights searching for?..

....

2 What was the object of Jason's voyage in the Argo?.................................

....

3 Who wrote Masquerade, about the search for a golden hare?...................

....

4 Columbus discovered America by accident — what was he looking for?.

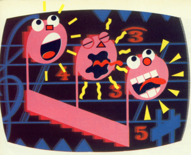
....

5 Who found Dr Livingstone?..

6 What was Morkin searching for in The Lords of Midnight?.......................

....

Tie Breaker — in ten words or less
What makes The Lords of Midnight and Doomdark's Revenge special?



notes all at the same time).

At the press of a button, you can summon up pre-programmed rhythms and bass accompaniments to play along to.

These three rhythm combinations can be speeded up or slowed down.

You can even glissando (so long as you don't hurt yourself.)

That is, make a note slide up in pitch.

You can filter sound: reduce the treble, the bass, or both. You can save, on cassette or disk, a voice or tune for future use.

And, for better sound reproduction, you can connect

MAKE MUSIC YOUR FORTE.

Alright, let's all gather round the computer for a good old sing-song.

You'll find the new Commodore 64 Music Maker strikes exactly the right note, whether you're an accomplished musician or whether you are an out-and-out beginner.

commodore COMPUTER SOFTWARE

If you can hum and know your ABC, you can start to play famous popular tunes immediately.

No matter if you've never played a note before.

Simply type in the notes from the SFX Tutor Handbook, then tap in the rhythm.

And, before you can even say 'Richard Clayderman', the automatic playback fills the room with music.

Once you've become a 'piano' virtuoso, you'll quickly appreciate the Music Maker's other amazing capabilities.

You can synthesize musical instruments, even create your own 'synth' electronic sounds.

You can play notes polyphonically.

(This is the smart way of saying you can play three different

Music Maker to your hi-fi system.

Music Maker has been designed, like all our software, to get the very best out of Commodore hardware.

It's the first in a series of packages which will fully exploit the Commodore 64's outstanding musical capabilities.

Commodore software: it costs no more, even though there's more to it.



MUSIC MAKER DISK OR CASSETTE £29.95.

Classified

ATARI 400/800/XL second hand software for sale at dumb prices. Adventures, arcade, strategy and utilities. SAE to Jervis, 19 Portree Drive, Nottingham NG5 5DT.

THE EARTHQUEST series for Spectrum 48K. Earthquest One "Rogue Ship". Earthquest Two "Zelos The Evil". Only £3.75 the two. Can you learn the seven powers? Will you use the Ultimate Weapon? What is the secret of the Timestone? Altair Software, 3 Cleve Avenue, Matlock DE4 3BD. Phone 56532 for details.

WANTED Artistic Spectrum owners to produce graphic screens for adventure games. Use our own compiled graphics language. Spare Time earnings. SAE for details: Keysoft, 6 Bruce Grove, Tottenham, London N17 6RA.

APPLE ADVENTURERS: Send your full particulars with US$2 to Choo: Locked Bag 2, Owen Road, PO, Singapore 9121 for list of adventures.

ANNOUNCING . . . A NEW, FREE CLASSIFIED SERVICE

We know that the Classified columns of a top selling specialist publication like Micro Adventurer can be invaluable if you want to contact other enthusiasts, if you need help solving any particular adventure or simply want to buy, sell or swap your hardware, software or peripherals.

Because of this, we're making our classified service completely FREE for private advertisers.

You can take up to 25 words to get your message across and as long as you're not running a business or selling anything for profit, we'll publish it in the next available issue.

Trade advertisers can still take boxed ads of course at £5.00 per single column centimetre.

Send your entries to the Micro Adventurer advertising department, you will find the address and coupon on this page.

DISPLAY AD INDEX

COMMODORE 64 OWNERS. Can you master the Twelve Labours of Hercules, or find The Golden Fleece? Two new adventure experiences only £4.99 each. John Stuart, 143 Drumossie Avenue, Inverness IV2 3SQ.

COMMODORE 64 Software Zork I. Suspended £7 each. Planetfall £20. No swaps. Doncaster 61672 after 6 pm.

Here's my classified ad.

PRIVATE ADVERTISERS ONLY

(Please write your copy in capital letters on the lines below.)

Please continue on a separate sheet of paper

Name ....

Address ....

....

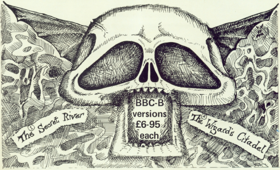
....

Telephone ....

Please cut out and send this form to: Classified Department, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7PP.

RUNEMAGIC

ADVENTURE SERIES



Triffid Software Research

Available by M/Order (p+p free)
Send cheques or Postal Orders to:

Triffid Software Research
12 Cullwood Lane
Ashley
New Milton
Hampshire
BH25 5QJ

Available from good computer software stores nationwide

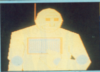


SPECTRUM 48K, ELECTRON and COMMODORE 64 versions coming soon

Send your software to us.
If accepted,
generous royalties offered.

COMPETITION CORNER

Tony Roberts tests your skill — send your answers to Competition Corner, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2H 7PP





25 copies of Return to Eden must be won

Lighting up time

THE L RING is defended by this ingenious device. On the left is an array of 15 numbered lights; these are controlled by the buttons on the right, marked 1, 2, and 3. When one of these buttons is pressed down, the lights bearing a number divisible by the number on the button pressed light up. If you press two buttons at once, then only those lights bearing numbers divisible by the numbers on both buttons will be lit. Simple, isn't it?

What you have to do is press the buttons in such a way that you spell out the word life, which is what you are trying to keep. The letters L-I-F-E have to be displayed on the array of lights in the correct sequence, ohe after the other.

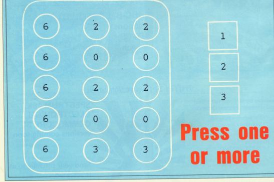
You have to press a button, or a combination of buttons, four separate times. Which buttons do you press, and in what order?

Twenty five correct entries will win copies of Level 9's latest game, *Return to Eden*, the sequel to *Snowball*. *Eden* is available for the Spectrum 48K, Amstrad, BBC B, Commodore 64, Memotech, Nascom and Atari, so don't forget to say what machine you have. Entries which do not specify one of the above machines will be disqualified.

The tie breaker is in two parts; firstly, who runs Level 9? Secondly, think of a title for a hypothetical fourth game in the *Silicon Dream* series. Bear in mind the fact that the second and third games both have a Biblical flavour to them . . . This is only a tie breaker, remember, so don't expect to see Level 9 using any of the names you think of! The funnier the name, the more likely you are to win.

Talking about winning brings us to the list of winners for the November issue. The following 30 people have each won a copy of the Stranglers LP, *Aural Sculpture*, which includes the adventure game *Aural Quest*.

Malcolm Harden, J Watson, Malcolm Dixon, S R Downes, D Roebuck, Stephan Bennett, Kevin Birnie, W Taylor, E Kirkham, Christina Norton, John Harvey, J Elsmore, Cliford Harding, R Beveridge, G Warren, Alan Campbell, Kev Crocombe, Ed Walsh, Robin Hamilton, Stewart Fleming, D Williamson, M Sheldon, Stephen Welburn, J Beaumont, W Hughes, Gregory Parker, Martin Day, Mark Graham, Mike Dench, and S Mitchell.



DORCAS SOFTWARE PRESENT

THE Runes OF Zendos

- High Resolution Graphics
- Full Animation
- Sentence Input
- 12 Separate adventures
- Sound Effects



The tiny principality of DORCASIA was a pleasant fertile land until the wizard ZENDOS used his evil powers to cast the country into perpetual darkness until all citizens pledge obedience to him.

It is known that through the SPELL OF DARKNESS Zendos has trapped the spirit of each month into one of 12 GOLDEN TEMPUS RUNES or RUNIC HOUR GLASSES hidden deep within his mysterious and magical castle.

As the land dies in the grip of the black desolation a hero must be found to locate and destroy the 12 hour glasses thus releasing the months and returning Dorcasia to the natural forces of the seasons.

Each glass has a RUNIC inscription around its base which you must read and understand. Only saying these words will lift that part of the spell. To protect the hour glasses Zendos has placed them in 12 separate rooms in his castle, each room linked to a different exterior gateway by a devious route.

Depending on which entrance you select Zendos casts spells which change the locations of rooms within his castle to confuse you. The menacing creatures and challenging problems which confront you at every turn mean that only the brave and the clever will succeed.



THE ORACLE'S CAVE

Our best seller available for the 48K SPECTRUM and COMMODORE 64.

Oracle's Cave is a unique adventure game featuring continuously displayed high resolution graphics and text, a new cave layout and event sequence for every game and a time limit on every adventure.

Available on cassette from leading retailers or direct from:

DORCAS SOFTWARE

3 The Oasis, Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8QS
at £7.95 (inc. VAT)
Postage and Packing FREE